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MYSTERIES OF THE PEOPLE;

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OR, THE

STORY OF A PLEBEIAN FAMILY

FOR 2,000 YEARS.

BY EUGENE SUE,

Author of the "Wandering Jew," &c., &c., &c

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TRANSLATED BY

MARY L. BOOTH,

Translator of Martin's "History of France," &c., &c.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

"THE MYSTERIES OF THE PEOPLE; OR, THE STORY OF A PLEBEIAN FAMILY FOR TWO THOUSAND YEARS," is universally acknowledged to be the greatest work of Eugene Sue, the first novelist of France. This thrilling romance is the history of the French people through ages of slavery, serfdom, feudal oppression and monarchical despotism, till the time when they became strong enough to throw off the yoke and regain their sovereignty. This is a phase of history heretofore unwritten. Hitherto, as the author says in his preface, the history of the kings, their courts, their intrigues, and their battles has been told again and again, but never that of their millions of subjects, which, on the contrary, has been carefully vailed. This book strips the illusion from the past, and reveals it in its truth, often harrowing and startling, but never overdrawn, as the abundant historical authorities prove. It is the complete romantic history of France from the days of Brennus, the Gaul, who subjected Rome to ransom, to the reign of Napoleon III., told in a series of tales of breathless interest and wonderful accuracy.

This great work, however, with the exception of a small fragment, has hitherto remained unknown. This fragment, comprising about one-sixth of the work, was first published under the Republic of 1848. It was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and congratulatory letters poured in on the author from all parts of France. A seat falling vacant at that moment in the Legislative Assembly, for the city of Paris, deputations from all the trades corporations went to Bordes, to tender him the nomination, and he was elected the representative of the people April 11th, 1850, by the unprecedented number of one hundred and seventeen thousand votes. The *coup d'état* of 1851 soon followed, and Eugene Sue was first imprisoned with his colleagues in Mont St. Michel by Louis Napoleon, and afterward went into voluntary exile at Savoy. During his exile, he completed "THE MYSTERIES OF THE PEOPLE," but no sooner did it appear in France than it was seized and suppressed by the government, to which the sad story of the sufferings of the people, as well as the strictures on the Bonapartes, seemed too dangerous to be allowed circulation among the masses. To this day the book remains interdicted in France. The author died a few weeks after from grief at the suppression of what he regarded as his greatest work; and the book has remained unknown until recently, when a costly and elegant edition has been issued at Brussels, by Victor Hugo's enterprising publishers, Lacroix, Verboeckhoven & Co. From this edition the translation has been made by Miss Mary L. Booth, the translator of Martin's "History of France," etc.

These tales, each one of which is complete in itself, form a complete and reliable history of the origin, religion, manners, customs, language, costume, habitations, professions, arts, manufactures and trades, as well as of the wretchedness, sufferings, struggles and triumphs of the French people—that is to say, the masses—from the remotest ages to the present time. Strange and terrible as many of them seem, especially those of the Middle Ages, they still fall short of

the fearful epochs which they depict. It would be difficult to conceive of greater power and vividness of description, united to such strict adherence to truth. He who wishes for a thrilling novel can find none more intensely interesting than these exciting tales, while he who wishes to study the history of France in all its details, will find them a faithful picture of facts outside of the province of the historian proper, yet essential to a full knowledge of the history of the times. We venture to say that this work, from its careful study of manners and customs, will henceforth be regarded as indispensable to the study of French history, upon which it throws a new and often startling light.

The lesson which Sue has sought above all to inculcate is that of Democracy. In this story of the working-classes, he has wished to show, by historic example, the abuses and dangers which grow out of inequality and privilege—the presence of a titled caste and a state religion. This dangerous doctrine procured the suppression of the book in imperial France; it should be an additional reason for its widespread circulation in democratic America.

Among the historical episodes illustrated by these tales, we will cite: THE DAYS OF THE DRUIDS, THEIR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS AND RELIGION; THE LAST EFFORT OF VERCINGETORIX TO SAVE GAUL; CÆSAR'S CONQUEST OF GAUL; SLAVERY UNDER THE ROMANS; THE GLADIATORIAL COMBATS AND GAMES OF THE CIRCUS; THE INVASION OF THE FRANKS; THE RULE OF VICTORIA THE GOOD, SURNAMED THE EMPEROR; THE COMING OF CHRIST, HIS CRUCIFIXION, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY IN FRANCE; THE BAGAUDIE AND THE VAGRERIE, THOSE GREAT UPRISINGS OF THE PEASANTS; CLOVIS AND THE MEROVINGIAN KINGS; THE TERRIBLE DUEL OF HALF A CENTURY'S DURATION BETWEEN THE CELEBRATED QUEENS FREDEGONDA AND BRUNEHILDA; THE WARS OF CHARLES MARTEL; THE REIGN OF CHARLEMAGNE; THE INVASION OF THE NORTHMEN AND THEIR SETTLEMENT IN NORMANDY; THE TRAGIC END OF THE CAROLINGIAN KINGS, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CAPETIAN DYNASTY; THE YEAR 1,000, THE PREDICTED END OF THE WORLD, WITH ITS INCIDENTS OF UNEARTHLY INTEREST; FEUDALISM AND SERFDOM; THE INSTITUTION OF CHIVALRY; THE CRUSADES; THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNES; THE TROUBADOURS; THE PERSECUTION OF THE ALBIGENSES; THE JACQUERIE; THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS; THE ENGLISH WARS; THE MOURNFUL STORY OF THE MAID OF ORLEANS; THE REFORMATION; CATHERINE DE MEDICIS AND HER SONS; ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY; THE ASSASSINATION OF HENRI IV.; THE DAYS OF RICHELIEU AND MAZARIN; THE IRON MASK; LOUIS XIV. AND HIS COURT; THE REGENCY; LOUIS XV. AND HIS TIMES; THE LAST OF THE CAPETS; THE FORMATION OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC; THE EXECUTION OF LOUIS XVI. AND MARIE ANTOINETTE; THE REIGN OF TERROR; THE FIRST NAPOLEON; LOUIS XVIII., CHARLES X. AND LOUIS PHILIPPE; THE FRENCH REPUBLIC OF 1848; THE *Coup d'état* OF 1851, AND THE INAUGURATION OF NAPOLEON III. All of these episodes, and many besides, are interwoven into the plot of these tales with a power that holds the reader chained breathless from the first page to the last, and makes him exclaim, "Truth is stranger than fiction."

The first series of tales which we offer our readers comprises, besides the Introduction, a tale of the Revolution of 1848, which is designed chiefly as a preface to the work, the GOLDEN SICKLE; or, the *Virgin of the Isle of Sena*, a touching story of the Druidical ages, of which so little is known: the BRASS BELL; or, the *Chariot of Death*, the last effort of Vercingetorix, the great Chief of the Hundred Valleys, to save his country; the battle of Vannes and the final subjugation of Gaul by Cæsar: and the IRON COLLAR; or, *Faustina and Siomara*, the most powerful and vivid picture ever drawn of Roman slavery, with its gladiatorial combats and circus games. This will be followed by seven other series, each complete in itself, and forming together a collection of historical romances, unique in design and unparalleled in interest, variety and accuracy. These books will be known as THE MYSTERIES OF THE PEOPLE, 1st series, 2d series, etc. Price, One Dollar each, being one-fourth the cost of the original.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.*

DEAR READERS:

Permit me first to thank you for the kindly welcome accorded by you to the "MYSTERIES OF THE PEOPLE," the success of which to-day exceeds my wildest hopes. I have received precious encouragement and proofs of lively sympathy. After responding thereto privately, I am proud and happy publicly to express my gratitude; this cordial support redoubles my strength. I have spoken of the praises which my work has received; I will speak with equal sincerity of a criticism which has been addressed to me, in the most kindly manner, moreover, and which appears to me of sufficient importance to call for the following explanation:

I have been rebuked for the great number of notes that accompany several numbers of this work. I had anticipated this objection myself almost from the beginning, by entreating you to read these notes attentively, and hoping to make their great importance understood. I will be more explicit:

Whatever confidence you may deign to have in my word, you will find in the following tales facts so strange, so extraordinary, and often even so monstrous, I might almost say so incredible, that, without the irrefutable historical authorities with which I accompany them, the most indulgent reader might believe, not, doubtless, that I wished to deceive, but that, led away by the imagination of a novelist, I had exaggerated facts beyond their farthest possible limits in order to render them more striking. There will be no danger of this if literal, irrefragable historical quotations serve, so to speak, to clench my assertions, and prove that, whatever may be the merit of my stories, they are truthful and reliable.

Then, the work once finished, these notes, which accompany it from the beginning, and which I assure my readers that I have chosen with the most scrupulous care from among innumerable documents, will form, by the side of the tales, which I have striven to render amusing and varied, not only an authentic history of the wretchedness, sufferings, struggles, and often, thank God! triumphs of the fathers of us of the working-classes, but also of their origin, religion, manners and customs, language, costume, habitations, vocations, arts, manufactures, trades, etc.

A word on this subject, dear readers. Hitherto (save a few eminent modern historians quoted in our notes) men have always written the history of our *kings*, their courts, their intrigues and their battles, but never that of us of the working-classes; on the contrary, this has been vailed from us, in order that we might draw neither virile teachings nor ardent faith and hope in a better future, from the knowledge and consciousness of the past. This has been a great misfortune, for the better we know and feel what our fathers and mothers suffered in order to conquer for us, through the ages, step by step, and century by century, at the price of their tears, martyrdom and blood, the sacred rights and liberties summed up to-day by the *sovereignty of the people* inscribed in our constitution, the dearer and more holy are these rights and liberties to us, and the more resolved we are to defend them.

The better we know and feel the frightful moral and physical slavery in which our ancestors of the conquered Gallic race were made to groan by our enemies in

* This preface was written by the author shortly after the appearance of the first few numbers of the work, in answer to the congratulatory letters which poured in on him from all parts of France. When one-sixth of the work had thus appeared, the publication was suppressed, not to be resumed till the present time.

all ages—the kings and nobles, sprung from the Frankish conquest, as well as the Ultramontanes, their worthy allies, Jesuits, inquisitors, etc.—the more resolved we shall be to break the bloody and abhorred yoke if the attempt is made to impose it on us anew.

Lastly, dear readers, the better we know and feel the unceasing progress of humanity, which, as is proved by history, has never taken a backward step, the firmer will be our faith in a constantly progressive future, and the more triumphantly shall we overcome that fatal discouragement by which the strongest suffer themselves to be bowed down in days of harsh trials—a fatal discouragement; for our enemies, continually on the alert, will avail themselves of it, with infernal art, temporarily to arrest our journey toward the promised land.

Finally, and above all, the better we know and feel the barbarites, usurpations, robberies, disasters, civil, social and religious wars, convulsions and revolutions without number, springing up anew, so to speak, in every century of our history, from the time of that crowned bandit, Clovis, to 1848, the more we shall laugh at the braggarts who have the deplorable audacity to present to us a monarchical government by divine or any other right, as a guarantee of order, peace, happiness and stability, and the more we shall be convinced that henceforth there is no safety or repose for France except in a republic.

It is my aim, therefore, according to the feeble measure of my strength, to inspire you by means of these tales with this knowledge and feeling of the past, which alone can give confidence in the future and insure its happiness; and, whatever may be the kindly sympathy with which you honor me, I regard it as a duty to you to join proofs to facts, and historic anthority to the scenes which I place before your eyes. It also seems to me that your conviction will be stronger and more fruitful if you can say, "This conviction springs from the profoundest and most reliable historical sources."

And for this reason, dear readers, I again entreat you to read with attention the notes, of which I shall be as sparing as possible, but which, in my opinion—and I hope that you will share it—are the indispensable complement of the work so cordially welcomed by you from its beginning.

Permit me to hope that you will continue this inestimable kindness, and believe in my efforts to render myself more and more worthy thereof.

EUGENE SUE.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

I HAVE been induced to undertake the translation of the following work chiefly through my interest in the history of France, and my desire to aid in popularizing the knowledge of this country and its eventful past, hitherto so imperfectly understood and appreciated by the masses, through the great lack that has existed of standard French histories in the English language.

There is one phase of the history of a nation that is best studied in novels; its domestic life—its manners and customs. The historian cannot pause to dwell on these details; he only gives the outlines, which the conscientious novelist fills up and personifies so as to make them living realities. It is well, therefore, in reading a standard history, to read a good historical novel of the epoch at the same time, that the novel may depict the daily life of the people more closely than it is the province of the history to do, while the history serves as a test of the truthfulness of the novel, and corrects any misstatement or erroneous coloring of facts into which the novelist may have been led by his imagination or personal bias.

The MYSTERIES OF THE PEOPLE, which may be regarded as the most brilliant and powerful work of that graphic writer, Eugene Sue, is a marvelous study of the inner life of the French people, from the remotest ages, which it depicts with Pre-Raphaelitish fidelity. Those who dissent most from the author's opinions cannot but be interested in the remarkable accuracy of this interior painting, in which the language, manners and customs, dress, mode of life, and avocations of a people for two thousand years are drawn with the minuteness of the most carefully wrought and highly finished Flemish picture; while the facts, opinions, legends and traditions of the past which are interwoven into the plot will commend themselves to all lovers of French history. Above all, it sums up and vividly portrays the true character of Druidism, that cradle of the Gauls, so much misunderstood till interpreted by Henri Martin, Jean Reynaud, La Tour d'Auvergne, and other modern writers. The concluding portion of the work places the history of the French Revolution, so much quoted and so imperfectly known by many among us, in a novel and striking light which cannot fail to excite curiosity and attention.

Moreover, the book is of especial value to a republican nation, inasmuch as it furnishes fresh proofs that the only safety for the people is in a republic. The few can only be exalted at the expense of the many; an aristocracy can only exist at the expense of the democracy. Nature alone can lawfully create inequality, and this inequality is born and ends with the man.

No words are needed with respect to the thrilling interest of the tales; they are their own best comment. I offer them to the American public with the hope that they may induce a more earnest and careful study of the history and genius of that French nation to which we Americans are chiefly indebted for our national independence, but which we have been too much in the habit of regarding through the spectacles of the English, the rivals and sworn foes of France.

MARY L. BOOTH.

EACH SERIES COMPLETE IN ITSELF.

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THE

MYSTERIES OF THE PEOPLE.

The Story of a Plebeian Family for Two Thousand Years.

INTRODUCTION.

THE DRAGOON'S HELMET—THE CONVICT'S CHAIN, OR THE LEBRENN FAMILY—1848, 1849.

CHAPTER I.

ON the 23d of February, 1848, an epoch when France for several days, and Paris for twelve hours, had been in a state of great excitement on account of the Reform banquets, there might have been seen in the Rue St. Denis, not far from the Boulevard, a good-sized shop, with the sign, "MARIK LEBRENN, LINEN DRAPER. *The Sword of Brennus.*" A decently painted sign-board represented the anecdote so well known in history: the chief of the Gallic army, Brennus, throwing his sword, with a haughty, ferocious air, into one of the scales holding the ransom paid by the Romans to their conquerors, our fathers, the Gauls, more than two thousand years ago.

The warlike sign of the linen-draper had at first excited much merriment among his neighbors, who soon forgot it, however, when they discovered that Marik Lebrenn was one of the best men in the world, a good husband and kind father, who sold capital articles, among others, superb Brittany linen from his native province, at reasonable prices. What more was needed? The worthy tradesman met his notes promptly, was polite and obliging to every one, and performed the functions of senior captain of the grenadier company of his battalion to the entire satisfaction of his beloved comrades; in short, he was a general favorite in his neighborhood, where he might be styled, in truth, one of the leading men.

On the 23d of February in question, a cold morning, the shutters were, as usual, taken down by the shop-boy, aided by the house-maid, both Bretons like their master, who always chose his servants from his native province. The house-maid, a handsome girl of twenty, was named Jeanike. The shop-boy, Gildas Pakou, a stalwart young lad from the Vannes country, had a frank countenance, which just now wore an air of astonishment at everything, for he had arrived in Paris but two days before. He spoke French tolerably well, but when in company with his country-woman, Jeanike, he preferred Low Breton, the ancient Gallic tongue, or very nearly resembling it; for which reason we shall translate the conversation between them.

Gildas Pakou seemed pensive as he busied himself with carrying the shutters inside; sometimes he even stopped short in the middle of the shop, resting his elbows and chin on the top of the shutter, as if buried in thought.

"What are you thinking of, Gildas?" said Jeanike.

"My dear," he answered, in a half-meditative, half-jesting tone, "do you remember our country ballad, Genevieve of Rustifan?"

"Of course; I have heard it from my cradle; it begins,

"'When Johnny watched his sheep and lambs,
He little thought a priest to be.'" *

"Well, Jeanike, I am like Johnny. When I was at Vannes, I little thought what I should see in Paris."

"And what do you see here that is so wonderful, Gildas?"

"Everything, Jeanike."

"Indeed!"

"And many other things beside."

"That is seeing a great deal."

"But listen: my mother said to me, 'Gildas, M. Lebrenn, our fellow-countryman, who buys the linen that we weave in the long winter evenings, has engaged you as his shop-boy. It is a God-fearing house, and you, who are a good, steady lad, will be as quiet there as here in our little town, for the Rue St. Denis, where your master lives, is inhabited only by respectable and peaceable tradesmen.' Well, Jeanike, no longer ago than last evening, only two days after my arrival, didn't we both hear the cry, 'Close the shops! close the shops!' the drums beating, the patrols marching, and crowds of men running noisily to and fro, some of them with great beards and

* In Brittany, which preserved its independence for several centuries after the Frankish conquest, and which to this day preserves the Gallic physiognomy, costume and language, the Druidical traditions and ballads are still in vogue among the common people. The ballad here referred to, which was sung by the wandering minstrels or bards in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, is sung in our times in Brittany.

frightful faces? I dreamed of them, Jeanike, I dreamed of them."

"Poor Gildas!"

"But if that were all!"

"What! is there anything more? Have you any fault to find with master?"

"With master! he is the best man in the world, I am sure of it; mother said so."

"Or Madame Lebrenn?"

"The dear, good woman! her gentleness reminds me of mother."

"Or the young lady?"

"Oh! as to her, Jeanike, we can say of her, as in the 'Song of the Poor,'

"'Your mistress is so good and fair,
That 'tis the poor man's daily prayer
That Heaven's best gifts may be her share.'"

"Ah! Gildas, how I love to listen to these songs of our country! That one seems made expressly for Miss Velleda, and I—"

"Stop, Jeanike," said the shop-boy, interrupting his companion, "you ask what surprises me; now, tell me, is that a name for a Christian? Velleda! What does it mean?"

"What have you to say against it? It is a fancy of master and mistress."

"And their son, who went back to school yesterday—what on earth is his name? It always seems like swearing when you speak it. Just say his name, Jeanike; come, say it."

"It is easy enough; his name is Sacrovir."

"There! I was sure of it; you spoke just as if you were swearing—you said *sacrrrrovir*."

"No, indeed, I didn't roll the r's as you do."

"They roll enough of themselves. But what a name!"

"It is another fancy of master and mistress."

"Well, and the green door?"

"The green door?"

"Yes, at the end of the hall; I saw master go in there yesterday, at noon, with a light."

"That's natural enough, since the shutters are always kept closed."

"And that you think is natural enough. Why are the shutters always kept closed?"

"I don't know, indeed; I suppose it's—"

"Another fancy of master and mistress, you were going to say, Jeanike."

"Of course."

"And what is there in this room which is dark at mid-day?"

"I don't know, Gildas. Nobody but master and mistress ever goes in there; not even their children."

"And does not all this seem very surprising to you, Jeanike?"

"Not at all, because I am used to it, as you will soon be, too." The young girl looked in the street, stopped short for a moment, then called to her companion, "Did you see him?"

"Whom?"

"That dragoon."

"A dragoon, Jeanike?"

"Yes; run, I beg you, and see whether he turns back toward the shop; I will tell you all about it by and by. Run, quick! quick!"

Gildas soon returned. "The dragoon did not turn back," said he. "But what have you to do with dragoons, Jeanike?"

"Nothing, thank God; but the barracks are close by."

"A bad neighborhood for young girls, close by these armed men," said Gildas, in a sententious tone; "a bad neighborhood; it reminds me of the ballad of the Demand,

"'I had in my dove-cote a sweet little dove;
The hawk, the destroyer, pounced down from above,
And, stricken with terror, away flew my love.*

"Do you understand, Jeanike? The doves are the young girls, and the hawk—"

"Is the dragoon. You did not know how nearly you had hit the mark."

"What, Jeanike, have you found the neighborhood of the hawks—that is, of the dragoons—so dangerous?"

"I was not thinking of myself."

"Of whom then?"

"Listen, Gildas; you are an honest fellow, and I am going to ask your advice. I'll tell you what has happened. Four days ago, Miss Velleda, who usually stays in the back shop, was waiting at the counter while master and mistress were out, with me by her side. I looked in the street, when I saw a soldier stop before the window."

"A dragoon, a hawk of a dragoon; eh! Jeanike?"

"Yes, but he was not a private soldier; he wore large gold epaulettes and a plume in his helmet. He must have been a colonel, at least. He stopped and looked into the shop."

The conversation was here interrupted by the sudden entrance of a man of about forty years of age, dressed in a black velveteen jacket and trowsers, like a railroad engineer. His strongly marked features were half hidden by a thick, brown beard. He rushed into the shop, and said to Jeanike in an anxious manner, "My good girl, where is your master? I must speak with him instantly. Run and tell him that Dupont wishes to see him. Don't forget my name—Dupont."

"M. Lebrenn went out very early this morning, and has not yet returned," said Jeanike.

"Ten thousand devils! He must have

* The Demand; a popular ballad of Brittany, quoted by Villemerqué.

gone there," said the stranger to himself. He was about to quit the shop as hastily as he had entered, when, recollecting himself, "My good girl," said he to Jeanike, "as soon as M. Lebrenn returns, tell him that Dupont has been here."

"Very well, sir."

"And that if he—M. Lebrenn," added Dupont, hesitating as if in search of an idea, then, doubtless having found it, he added, hastily, "Tell your master, in short, that if he has not been to his *pepper stores* this morning—mind, his *pepper stores*—not to go there before seeing Dupont. You will remember this?"

"Yes, sir; but had you not better write to M. Lebrenn?"

"Oh! no," said Dupont, quickly, "it would be useless, merely tell him—"

"Not to go to his pepper stores before having seen Dupont," returned Jeanike. "Is that right, sir?"

"Precisely. Good day," and he instantly vanished.

"So, M. Lebrenn is also a grocer, since he has pepper stores," said Gildas, with a bewildered air.

"This is the first that I have heard of it."

"And how confused that man seemed—did you notice it, Jeanike? Ah! this is indeed a wonderful house!"

"You are fresh from the country, and astonished at everything. But let me finish my story of the dragoon."

"The story of the dragoon with gold epaulettes and a plume in his helmet, who stopped to look at you through the window, Jeanike?"

"It was not I that he was looking at."

"Who was it then?"

"Miss Velleda."

"Really!"

"Miss Velleda was busy with her embroidery, and did not see that the dragoon was gazing at her with all his eyes. For my part, I was so dumfoundered that I dared not tell her that he was looking at her."

"Ah! Jeanike, this reminds me of a ballad that—"

"Let me finish, Gildas, and then you can tell me your ballad if you like. This dragoon—"

"This hawk—"

"Well, he was there, staring at Miss Velleda with all his eyes."

"With all his hawk's eyes, Jeanike?"

"Do let me finish. Presently Miss Velleda noticed the attention of which she was the object, upon which she turned as red as a cherry, and telling me to mind the shop, retreated to the back room. That was not all; the next day the Colonel returned, this time in citizen's dress, and looked in again at the window. But madame was at the counter, and he did not stand long on guard. The day before yesterday, back he came, but he did not see Miss Velleda. At last, yesterday, while Madame Lebrenn was in the shop, he entered and asked her very politely whether she could furnish him a large supply of ready-made linen. Madame answered yes, and it was agreed that the Colonel should return to day to settle with M. Lebrenn about the order."

"And do you think, Jeanike, that Madame had noticed this officer looking in at the window?"

"I don't know, Gildas, nor do I know whether I ought to tell her. Just now I asked you to go and see whether the dragoon turned back, because I thought he might be watching us; but, happily, it is not so. Now, do you advise me to tell mistress or not? If I do, it may make her uneasy; if I do not, it may be wrong. What do you think?"

"I think that you ought to tell Madame, for she may suspect something from this large order for linen. Hem! hem!"

"I will follow your advice."

"And you will do well. Oh! my dear girl, these armed men—"

"Oh! oh! you are thinking of your ballad, are you not?"

"It is a terrible ballad, Jeanike; my mother has sung it to me a hundred times of an evening, as my grandmother had to her, and as my grandmother's grandmother had—"

"Come, Gildas," said Jeanike, laughingly interrupting her companion, "from one grandmother to another, you will go back to mother Eve—"

"Of course, are there not tales in the country which date back—"

"A thousand or fifteen hundred years, or more, like the ballads of Myrdin and those of the Baron de Jauioz, which I have heard from my cradle. I know that, Gildas."

"Well, Jeanike, the ballad of which I spoke in connection with these men that wear helmets and prowl about young girls is a frightful one; it is called the 'Three Red Cross Knights, or the Sieur de Plouernel.'"

"What do you say," cried Jeanike, struck with the name, "the Sieur what?"

"The Sieur de Plouernel."

"That is singular."

"Why so?"

"M. Lebrenn sometimes mentions this name."

"The name of the Sieur de Plouernel; and why?"

"I will tell you directly; but let us first hear the story of the Three Red Knights, for now I feel doubly interested in it."

"You know, Jeanike, that the Red Cross Knights were Templars, and wore swords and helmets, like this hawk of a dragoon."

"Very well; but make haste, for mistress may come down or master return at any moment."

"Listen, Jeanike." And Gildas chanted in a lugubrious tone the ballad of the Three Red Knights."*

"'THE THREE RED CROSS KNIGHTS.

"'My soul is sad and weary, thinking of the woes of life,
Of the frightful crimes and anguish with which the world is rife,
And of how the fair Katelik, just a year ago to-day,
Journeyed toward the town of Kemper, telling her rosary on the way.

"'When behold, three Red Knights Templars overtook the timid maid,
All appareled in full armor, while loud their horses neighed;
"Come with us, we will deck you with jewels rare," they cried.
"Oh! no, fair lords, too much I dread those fierce swords by your side."

"'"Come with us to the convent, thou shalt have no cause for fear,"
"Seven young brides once entered in there, who did never more appear."
Then up spoke Gontran Plouernel, "For the eighth we will have you."
Quick across his steed he threw her, and toward the convent flew.'"

"Oh! the poor, dear child," cried Jeanike, wringing her hands. "And what became of her in the convent of these Red Knights?"

"You will see," said Gildas, with a sigh, continuing his song:

"'None again beheld Katelik, but ere a year had sped,
The Red Knights drew close together, and whispered in their dread,
"How rid us of this girl who is like to bring us shame?"
"Beneath the altar buried, there is none will breathe her name."'"

"Oh!" cried Jeanike, "they ruin her first, the wretches, and then kill her to get rid of her."

"I tell you again, that is always the way with these soldiers," said Gildas, in a dogmatic tone.

"'"Twas black and stormy midnight, the thunders rent the air,
A traveler sought the convent, in hope of shelter there,
When, looking through a crevice, by a flickering light he spied
Three Red Knights around the altar, with Katelik by their side,

"'Bound, half naked, and entreating, "Dear sirs, spare my life, I pray;
By night I'll roam the forests, and lie hid the livelong day."
The light vanished. From the open grave the traveler heard the cry,
"Oh! baptize my babe, and give me the last unction ere I die."

"'The traveler ran to Kemper, crying, "Bishop, up and save
Katelik and her infant from their cruel, living grave!"
They digged beneath the altar, and buried deep they found
The dead mother, with her baby on her bosom slumbering sound.

"'At the sight the holy bishop fell upon his knees in prayer,
With the Red Cross Knights around him. Three days he lay prostrate there,
On the third day, lo! the infant oped his eyes, and to the three
Red Knights walked he straightway, crying, "Gontran Plouernel, thou art he!"'"

"Well," said Gildas, shaking his head, "is not this a terrible story? Did I not tell you that these men in arms were always hovering round young girls like hungry hawks? But what are you thinking of, Jeanike? You do not answer me—you seem dreaming."

"It is really very extraordinary, Gildas. That rascally Red Knight was called the Sieur de Plouernel?"

"Yes."

"I have often heard M. Lebrenn speak of that family as though he bore them some grudge, and say, in speaking of a bad man, he is a son of the Plouernels, just as he might have said, he is a son of the devil!"

"What a wonderful house this is!" returned Gildas, with a meditative and half-frightened air. "Here is M. Lebrenn pretending to have a grudge against the family of a Red Knight who died eight or nine hundred years ago. However, Jeanike, the story will be of use to you, I hope."

"What, Gildas," said Jeanike, laughing, "do you imagine that there are any Red Knights in the Rue St. Denis, and that they carry off young girls in omnibuses?"

Just as Jeanike uttered these words, a servant in livery entered the shop and asked for M. Lebrenn.

"He is not at home," answered Gildas.

"Then, my lad," said the servant, "you can tell your master that the Colonel expects him this morning to arrange about the linen which he spoke of yesterday to your mistress. Here is my master's address," added the servant, placing a card on the counter. "And be sure to tell your master to be punctual; the Colonel does not like to be kept waiting." The servant left the shop, and Gildas, mechanically taking up the card, read it and cried, turning pale, "By St. Anne of Auray, it does not seem possible!"

"What is the matter, Gildas?"

"Read this, Jeanike." And, with a trembling hand, he extended the card to his companion, who read, THE COUNT GONTRAN DE PLOUERNEL, Colonel of Dragoons, 18 Rue de Paradis-Poissonière. "A wonderful, wonderful house!" repeated Gildas, raising his hands to heaven, while Jeanike appeared as surprised and almost as frightened as the shop-boy.

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* This ballad, which is still popular in Brittany, dates back to the eleventh or twelfth century; it has therefore been handed down from generation to generation for eight or nine hundred years.

CHAPTER II.

While the foregoing scene was transpiring in the shop of M. Lebrenn, another scene was taking place, at almost the same moment, in the fifth story of an old house situated opposite that inhabited by the linen-draper. We entreat our readers to accompany us to a modest apartment of extreme neatness. An iron bedstead, a commode, two chairs, and a table, over which hung a few shelves filled with books, constituted the sole furniture. At the head of the bed a kind of trophy, composed of a military cap and a pair of epaulettes of a sub-lieutenant of light infantry, was suspended on the wall, over an official discharge from the army framed in dark wood. In one corner of the room, various joiner's tools were ranged on a bench; on the bed was a rifle just cleaned, and on a little table were a bullet-mould, a bag of powder, and a mould for cartridges, several packages of which were already prepared.

The tenant of this dwelling, a young man of about twenty-six, of a manly and handsome figure, in a workman's blouse, had already risen. He was leaning on his elbow on the sill of his attic-window, gazing attentively at the house of M. Lebrenn, and particularly at one of the four windows beneath which was placed the famous sign, *The Sword of Brennus*. There was nothing particular about this window, with its spotless white curtains closely drawn, except a wooden box, painted green and overloaded with carefully-wrought carvings, which extended the whole length of the window and contained a few winter heliotropes and snowdrops in full bloom. The features of the occupant of the attic wore an expression of profound and almost painful melancholy, as he gazed on the window in question. In a few moments, a tear fell from the eyes of the young man and trickled down his brown moustache.

The noise of a clock striking half-past seven aroused George Duchêne (for that was his name) from his reverie; he brushed his hand across his moist eyes, and quitted the window, saying bitterly, "Bah! to-day or to-morrow a bullet will rid me of this mad love. Thank God! there will soon be some real fighting, and my death at least will serve the cause of freedom." Then, after a moment's reflection, he added, "But my grandfather; I was quite forgetting him!" Taking from the corner of the room a chafing-dish half full of live coals, which he had used for running his bullets, he placed a little earthen saucepan, full of milk, over the fire, crumbled some white bread into it, and in a few minutes prepared an appetizing milk-porridge which might have excited the jealousy of a skillful cook.

After hiding the musket and ammunition under the bed, George opened a door in the partition, and taking the saucepan, carried it into the next room, where a man of great age, with a mild and venerable face, shaded by long white hair, was lying in a bed far superior to his own. The old man seemed very feeble; his emaciated and wrinkled hands trembled continually. "Good morning, grandfather," said George, tenderly embracing him. "Did you sleep well last night?"

"Pretty well, my child."

"Here is your milk-porridge. I have kept you waiting for some time."

"Oh! no, the sun has but just risen. I heard you get up and open your window more than an hour ago."

"It is true. My head was a little heavy, so I took the air betimes."

"I also heard you walking to and fro in your room during the night."

"Poor grandfather! Did I wake you?"

"No, I was not asleep. But come George, be frank; something ails you."

"No! not at all."

"For several months, you have been sad; you have grown pale and have changed so that your friends would hardly know you; you are no longer gay as on your first return from the regiment."

"I assure you, grandfather—"

"Assure me! assure me, indeed! I can trust my own eyes; you cannot deceive me; I have eyes like a mother."

"That's true," returned George, smiling, 'and I ought therefore to call you grandmother, for you are as good, tender, and solicitous toward me as a real grandmother would be. But, believe me, you are troubling yourself about nothing. Come, here is your spoon; wait till I put the little tray on your bed; it will be more convenient for you." And George took from a corner a little, polished black-walnut tray, and, putting the basin of bread and milk on it, set it before the old man.

"There is nobody like you, my boy, for this kind of attentions," said his grandfather.

"It would be a pity if, cabinet-maker and joiner as I am, I could not have made you a convenient table?"

"Oh! you have an answer for everything, I know," said the old man, as he began to eat with so trembling a hand that his spoon clattered two or three times against his teeth.

"Oh! my poor child," said he sadly to his grandson, "see how my hand shakes. It seems to me that it grows worse every day."

"On the contrary, grandfather, it seems to me that it grows better."

"No, no! it is too late; there is no help for this infirmity."

"Well, well, if it can't be helped, you must make up your mind to bear it."

"That is what I ought to have done from the beginning, but I cannot make up my mind to be infirm and a burden on you for the rest of my life."

"Grandfather, grandfather, we shall fall out."

"Why was I such a fool as to be a gilder! In fifteen or twenty years, and often sooner, half the workmen become infirm old men like me, but they have not all, like me, a grandson to spoil them—"

"Grandfather—"

"Yes, you spoil me; I tell you again, you spoil me."

"Oh! very well, I will pay you back in your own coin; it is the only way of putting out your fire, as we say in the regiment. Now, I know a good man, called Father Morin; he was a widower, and had but one daughter, eighteen years old—"

"George, listen—"

"No, no! This worthy man married his daughter to an honest fellow, who was too much addicted to boxing; one day, he received an unlucky blow in an affray, and died two years after his marriage, leaving his young wife with a little boy on her hands."

"George! George!"

"The poor woman nursed her child for a time; but her husband's death affected her so much that she died, leaving the boy a burden on his grandfather."

"Good God, George, how provoking you are! What is the use of always talking of that?"

"He loved the child so much that he would never be separated from him. During the day, while he was at work, a good neighbor took care of the urchin; but as soon as he returned at night, he had but one thought, one cry—for his little George. He nursed him as well as the best and tenderest of mothers could have done; he ruined himself in buying him pretty dresses and hats, and was so proud of his grandson that the neighbors, who adored the worthy man, gave him the name of Papa Nurse."

"But, George—"

"In this way he brought up the child, constantly watching over him, providing for all his wants, and sending him to school, and then to a trade, till—"

"Well, well, so much the worse," cried the old man in a determined tone, unable longer to restrain himself. "Since we have undertaken to tell each other our good deeds, it is my turn, and we shall see. In the first place, you were the son of my poor Georgine, whom I loved so well; I have therefore only done my duty, mark that!"

"And I have only done mine."

"Hush! let me speak," cried the old man, gesticulating violently with his spoon. "This is what you have done. You were so lucky as to escape the conscription."

"Grandfather, take care!"

"Oh! I am not afraid of you."

"You will overturn the basin if you excite yourself in this way."

"I excited! what, do you think I have no blood in my veins? Yes, answer me, you, who talk so much about others; when my infirmity began, what did you do, unhappy child? You went in search of a dealer in human flesh."

"Grandfather, your porridge is cooling; do pray eat it while it is warm."

"Ha! ha! you wish to shut my mouth; but I am not your dupe. And what did you say to this dealer in human flesh? 'My grandfather is infirm; he can no longer support himself; I am his only resource, and this may fail, for I may fall sick or be out of work. He is old—secure him an annuity, and I will sell myself to you! And you did it," cried the old man, with tears in his eyes, waving his spoon in the air with so vehement a gesture, that basin, tray and all would have fallen from the bed, had not George seized them, exclaiming, "Be quiet, grandfather, you will upset everything."

"It is all the same to me; that shall not prevent me from telling why and how you became a soldier—why you sold yourself for me to that dealer in human flesh."

"All this is nothing but an excuse for not eating your porridge; I see that you do not like it."

"O dear! now he says that I do not like his porridge!" cried the old man, in despair. "This provoking boy is determined to drive me to distraction." Then, thrusting his spoon furiously into the basin, and hastily raising it to his lips, he added, with his mouth full, "Look, this is the way that I do not like it—look! look! look!" And at every *look!* he swallowed a spoonful.

"For God's sake, grandfather, not so fast," cried George, seizing the old man's arm; "you will choke yourself."

"It will be your fault, telling me that I do not like your porridge, when it is delicious!" returned his grandfather, becoming calmer, and swallowing the milk more leisurely; "it is fit for the gods!"

"Without vanity," said George, smiling, "I was renowned in the regiment for making good porridge. Come, now I am going to fill your pipe." And leaning toward the old man, he said coaxingly, "Ah! the good old grandpapa, he likes his little pipe in bed."

"What shall I say? George, you are making a pacha of me, a real pacha," replied old Morin, while his grandson took a pipe from the shelf, filled it with tobacco, lighted it, and offered it to him; then, leaning back on his pillow, he began to smoke with gusto.

"What are you going to do to-day?" said George, seating himself on the foot of the bed.

"Take my usual walk on the Boulevard, and sit down a little if the weather is fine."

"Hem! Grandfather, I think that you had better postpone your walk. You saw the crowds in the streets yesterday; they and the police very nearly came to blows. To-day, it may be more serious."

"Oh! my child, you will not have anything to do with these outbreaks, will you? I know that it is hard to restrain yourself, when you feel that you are in the right; for it was outrageous in the government to forbid those banquets; but I should be so anxious about you!"

"Make yourself easy, grandfather; you have nothing to fear on my account. But take my advice, and don't go out to-day."

"Well, my boy, then I will stay at home and amuse myself by reading a little in your books, and looking out of the window at the passers-by as I smoke my pipe."

"Poor grandfather," said George, smiling, "from this height you can see nothing but their hats."

"That doesn't matter; it is enough to amuse me; and then I can see the neighbors opposite at their windows. By the way, now I think of it, there is something about the houses across the way that I have always forgotten to ask you. Tell me, what is the meaning of that linen-draper's sign with the armed warrior throwing his sword into the scales. You must surely know, for you helped to fit up the shop."

"I knew no more about it than you do, grandfather, till my employer sent me to work at M. Lebrenn's."

"They say in the neighborhood that the linen-draper is a very honest man; but what the deuce made him choose such a sign? The Sword of Brennus! if he had been an armorer, it could be easily accounted for. I know that there is a pair of scales in the picture, and that scales remind us of trade; but why does this warrior, with his helmet and his swaggering air, throw his sword into the scales?"

"Well, grandfather—but I am ashamed, at my age, to seem to be giving you a lesson."

"Ashamed, and why? Instead of going to the tavern on Sunday, you stay at home and study. You might well give a lesson to your grandfather; there is no reason to be ashamed of it."

"Well, grandfather, this warrior with a helmet, this Brennus, was a Gaul, one of our ancestors, and the commander of an army that went to Italy, more than two thousand years ago, to attack Rome and punish it for its treachery. The city was restored to the Gauls on the payment of a ransom in gold, but Brennus, not thinking the ransom large enough, threw his sword into the scale containing the weights."

"To make the ransom heavier, the dog! He did just the opposite to the fruit-women, who give the beam a push with their thumbs. I understand that, but there are two things that I don't understand: first, you tell me that this warrior, who lived more than two thousand years ago, was one of our ancestors?"

"Yes, inasmuch as Brennus and his army belonged to the race from which almost all of us in this country are descended."

"Wait a moment—you say that they were Gauls?"

"Yes."

"Then are we descended from the Gallic race?"

"Certainly."*

"But we are French. How the deuce do you get over that, my boy?"

"Our country, the mother country of us all, was not always called France."

"Stop! stop! stop!" cried the old man, taking the pipe from his mouth; "what! has not France always been called France?"

"No, grandfather; in time immemorial our country was called Gaul, and was a republic as glorious and as powerful, but happier and twice as large, as France in the days of the Empire."

"Bah! that is too much to believe."

"Unhappily, this was two thousand years ago."

"Is that all, two thousand years ago! How you run on, my boy!"

"Dissension arose in Gaul, the provinces rose against each other."

"Ah! that is always the harm; that was what the priests and the royalists strove so much for at the time of the Revolution."

"Therefore, grandfather, what happened

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* "It has been my aim," says Amédée Thierry, in his *History of the Gauls*, "to make known that Gallic race from which nineteen twentieths of us Frenchmen are descended. I have gathered up the scattered relics with religious care, and traced our ancestry through the annals of a score of nations. The striking characteristics of the Gallic race and those through which, in my opinion, it differs most from other races, are a personal bravery which was unequaled among the ancient nations, and a frank, impetuous, impressionable and eminently intelligent mind."

"The first men who peopled the west of Europe," says Henri Martin, in his *History of France*, "were the Galls or Gauls, our true ancestors, for their blood predominated in that successive mixture of nations which formed the modern Frenchmen; all the good and some of the bad qualities of the Gauls—their most striking characteristics—still survive in us, and attest our antique origin."

"It is indisputable," says Jean Reynaud, in his article on Druidism, "that we have never paid sufficient honor to our fathers, the Gauls; it would seem as though, dazzled by the prestige of Hebrew and even of Greek and Latin antiquity, we had hastened to depreciate our own and pass it over in silence. But I venture to say, that if it had been God's will for the Scriptures to have embalmed our paternal inheritance for us as brilliantly as it did that of the Hebrews, Greeks and Romans, far from humbling our national antiquity before that of these nations, we should have been prouder of it than of any other."

to France in 1814 and 1815, happened to Gaul centuries ago."

"A foreign invasion?"

"Precisely. The Romans, formerly vanquished by Brennus, had become powerful. They took advantage of the dissensions of our fathers, and invaded the country—"

"Just as the Cossacks and the Prussians invaded us?"

"Exactly so. But the Romans did what the good friends of the Bourbons, the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia, dared not do, though not for want of good-will; despite the heroic resistance of our forefathers, who were as brave as lions, though unhappily divided among themselves, they were reduced to slavery like negroes."

"Good God! is it possible?"

"Yes. They wore an iron collar marked with the initials of their masters, when these initials were not branded on their foreheads by hot irons."

"Our forefathers!" cried the old man, clasping his hands with sorrowful indignation, "our forefathers!"

"And if they attempted to flee, their masters cut off their noses and ears, or even their hands and feet."

"Our forefathers!"

"At other times, their masters diverted themselves by throwing them to the wild beasts; or put them to death with frightful tortures, when they refused to till the lands, under the lash of their conquerors, which had belonged to them."

"But, stop," resumed the old man, collecting his thoughts, "wait a bit—that reminds me of a song addressed by an old friend to us humble folk."

"One of our Béranger's songs, entitled 'The Gallic Slaves,' is it not, grandfather?"

"Just so, my boy. It begins,

"'Some ancient Gauls, unhappy slaves,
One night, when all around them slept.'

and the chorus is,

"'Come, once the terror of the world,
Let's drown our cares in wine.'

It is of our fathers, the Gauls, then, that Béranger speaks. Alas! poor men, like many others, they drank to forget their misfortunes."

"Yes, grandfather, but they soon saw that to forget their misfortunes was of no use, and that it was better to break their chains. The Gauls, therefore, after numerous insurrections—"

"I say, my boy, it strikes me that this method is not very new, but it is always the best one. Eh! eh!" added the old man, knocking the ashes from his pipe. "Do you see, George, sooner or later, we must always come back to that good old mother, insurrection, as in 1789, as in 1830, and as to-morrow, perhaps."

"Poor grandfather!" thought George, "he little thinks how near he is to the truth. You are right," he continued aloud; "as to liberty, the people must help themselves from the dish, or nothing but the crumbs will be left them; they will be robbed of it, as they have been for these eighteen years past."

"And frightfully robbed, my poor boy; I can testify to that."

"Happily, the burnt child—you know the proverb, grandfather, a word is sufficient. The lesson has been a good one. But to return to the Gauls; they had recourse, as you say, to that good old mother, insurrection, who did not fail her dear children, and the latter, by dint of perseverance, energy, and bloodshed, succeeded in reconquering part of their liberty from the Romans, who, moreover, had not rechristened the country, but called it Roman Gaul."

"Just as we now say French Algeria?"

"Just so."

"Well, then, our brave Gauls, thanks to the good old mother, insurrection, managed to get up in the world again, as the saying is. This puts new life in my veins."

"Ah! grandfather, stop a moment; what our fathers had suffered was nothing in comparison to what they were to suffer."

"And I was already easy in my mind! Pray tell me what happened to them."

"Fancy that thirteen or fourteen hundred years ago, hordes of semi-barbarians, called Franks, from the depths of the forests of Germany—true Cossacks, in short—attacked the Roman armies, enervated by the conquest of Gaul, defeated them, drove them out, and seized in turn on our unhappy country, which they even robbed of its name, calling it France, by right of conquest."

"The brigands!" cried the old man. "Upon my word, I prefer the Romans; they left us our name at least."

"It is true; and then the Romans were the most civilized people of the world, their barbarity toward the slaves excepted; they had covered Gaul with magnificent buildings, and restored a part of their liberty to our fathers, either willingly or by force, while the Franks, as I have said, were true Cossacks, and under their dominion, the Gauls had to begin their struggle anew."

"Good God!"

"These hordes of Frankish bandits—"

"Call them Cossacks; that is what they were."

"Even worse, if possible, grandfather. These Frankish bandits—or Cossacks, if you choose—called their chiefs KINGS. This royal seed took root and flourished in our country, which is the reason why for so many centuries we have had the happiness of possessing kings of Frankish origin, and

why the royalists call them kings by *divine right*."

"Say rather by *Cossack right*. A fine present!"

"The chiefs called themselves DUKES and COUNTS; this seed also took root and flourished in our country, which is the reason why we have so long had the pleasure of possessing a nobility of Frankish origin, who have treated us as a conquered race."

"What is it that you say?" exclaimed the old man in astonishment. "If I understand you rightly, my boy, these Frankish bandits, these Cossacks, kings and chiefs, once masters of Gaul, divided among themselves the lands which the Gauls had in part reconquered from the Romans."

"Yes, grandfather; the Frankish kings and nobles robbed the Gauls of their property, and divided the lands and men among themselves, as they would have divided an estate and its cattle."

"And our fathers were thus despoiled of their goods by these Cossacks?"

"Our fathers were reduced to slavery anew, as under the Romans, and forced to cultivate for the Frankish kings and nobles the soil that had belonged to them ever since Gaul had been Gaul."

"So that the Frankish kings and nobles, after robbing them of their property, lived upon the sweat of their brow?"

"Yes, grandfather, they sold them all—men, women, and children—in the market-place. If they refused to labor, they beat them as they would have done a restive animal, or killed them, through anger or cruelty, as they would have killed a horse or dog; for our fathers and mothers belonged to the Frankish kings and nobles, like sheep to their master, by right of the conquest of the Gauls by the Franks. This state of things lasted till the revolution which you witnessed, grandfather; and you remember the vast difference that existed even then between a noble and a plebeian, a lord and a workingman."

"Yes, indeed, the difference that there is between the master and the slave."

"Or, if you prefer, between the Frank and the Gaul."

"But if this is true," cried the old man, "then I am no longer proud of being a Frenchman. Yet how, in heaven's name, could our fathers, the Gauls, have allowed themselves to be thus subjugated by a handful of Franks—no, of Cossacks, for centuries?"

"Ah! grandfather, these Franks possessed the land which they had stolen; therefore they possessed the wealth. The immense army was composed of their pitiless hordes; then, half-exhausted by their long struggle with the Romans, our fathers were soon forced to submit to another terrible influence, that of the priests."

"That was all that was wanting to complete their wretchedness."

"To their eternal shame, almost all the Gallic bishops forswore their country from the time of the Conquest, and made common cause with the Frankish kings and nobles, whom they soon managed to rule through cunning and flattery, and from whom they wrung all the land and money that they could. Many of these holy bishops also had serfs, whom they sold and worked like the Frankish conquerors, and lived in the most horrible debauchery—degrading, tyrannizing over, and brutalizing the Gallic population, preaching to them resignation, respect and obedience toward the Franks, and threatening with the devil the wretches who would have gladly rebelled, in behalf of the liberty of their country, against these foreign lords and kings, who owed their power and wealth solely to violence, robbery, and murder."*

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* It is for the sake of our brethren of the people and the working classes that we write this history under a form which we strive to render amusing. We entreat them, therefore, to read these notes, which are, so to speak, the key to the stories, and which prove that, under the form of romance, there will be found the *most absolute* historical fact. We give a few extracts from ancient and modern historians, which will prove, though from different standpoints, that there have always been two races among us, the conquerors and the conquered.

A chronicle of the year 1119, cited in Amédée Thierry's *History of the Merovingian Times*, says, "Whence it comes that to day this nation calls all those Franks in its tongue who are in the full enjoyment of liberty; as to those living in it in the condition of tributaries, it is clear that they are not Franks by right of origin, but are only the sons of Gauls subjected to the Franks by right of conquest." Charles Loyseau, in his treatise on the posts of the nobility, says in turn, in 1701: "With respect to our Franks, when they conquered the Gauls, it is certain that they made themselves lords of the property and persons of the same; I mean absolute lords, both as to public and private dominion. As to the person, they made the Gauls serfs." Later, the Count de Boulainvilliers, one of the proudest champions of French aristocracy and royalty, wrote, "The Franks, the conquerors of Gaul, established their government therein wholly distinct from the subjugated nation. The Gauls became the subjects, the Franks were the lords and masters. From the time of the Conquest, the Franks by origin have been the true nobles and the only persons eligible to be so, and have enjoyed certain material advantages, in consequence of this nobility, such as exemption from public burdens, the exercise of justice where the Gauls are concerned, etc." Later still, Sieyès, in his famous pamphlet, *What is the Third Estate?* which sounded the first signal for revolt against royalty in '89, said, "If the aristocrats undertake, even at the price of that liberty of which they show themselves unworthy, to hold the people in bondage, the Third Estate will demand by what right they do so. Should the reply be, by right of conquest, it will be necessary to go back some distance, I admit, but the Third Estate need not fear to go back to past ages. Why should it not send back to the forests of Germania all the families who maintain the mad pretension of having sprung from the race of the conquerors and having succeeded to their rights by conquest? In such a case, I think that the purified nation could console itself for being composed only of the descendants of the Gauls." Lastly, M. Guizot, in the last year of the Restoration, wrote these eloquent words, "The revolution of '89 was a true war between foreign nations. For more than thirteen hundred years, France had contained two nations, a nation of conquerors and a nation of the conquered. For more than thirteen hundred years, the conquered nation had been struggling to throw off the yoke of the conquering nation. *Our history is the history of this conflict.*

"Ah! but why the deuce didn't that good old mother, insurrection, step in, in spite of these accursed bishops, and mend matters? Did our fathers let themselves be fleeced without rebelling from the time of the Conquest till the glorious days of the Revolution, when we began to make these Frankish kings and nobles, and their allies, the clergy, who, by force of habit, had continued to grow fat on our spoils, disgorge their plunder?"

"It is not likely that all this occurred without numerous insurrections against the kings, nobles, and priests. But, grandfather, I have told you the little I know, and that little I learned while I was fitting up the shop of M. Lebrenn, the linen-draper opposite."

"How was that, my boy?"

"M. Lebrenn, who is one of the best men in the world, talked to me while I was at work, and told me the history of our forefathers, of which I was ignorant like you. My curiosity once awakened, and it is great—"

"I believe you."

"I put a thousand questions to him while I was planing and fitting, which he answered with fatherly goodness. It was in this way that I learned the little that I have told you. But," added George, with a scarcely smothered sigh, "my carpenter work finished, the lessons in history were broken off. I have told you all that I know, therefore, grandfather."

"Ah! is the linen-draper opposite so learned?"

"He is as learned as he is patriotic; he is an old Gaul, as he calls himself. And," added George, unable to repress a slight blush, "I have sometimes heard him say to his daughter, while proudly embracing her for some answer she had made him, 'Ah! you too are a true Gallic woman.'"

At this moment, Father Morin and George heard a knock at the door of the next room.

"Come in!" said George.

Some one entered.

"Who's there?" asked the young man.

"It is I, Lebrenn," answered a voice.

"What! the worthy linen-draper of whom we were just speaking—the old Gaul," said Father Morin to himself. "Go quickly, my boy, and shut the door."

George, as agitated as surprised by this unexpected visit, left his grandfather's room, and found himself face to face with Lebrenn.

CHAPTER III.

Marik Lebrenn, though appearing younger, was about fifty years of age. His great stature, the nervous muscular development of his neck, arms, and shoulders, the proud and resolute bearing of his head, his broad and strongly marked countenance, the firm and penetrating glance of his sea-blue eyes, and his thick and shaggy, bright chestnut hair, somewhat grizzled and growing rather low on a forehead that seemed as impenetrable as marble, presented the characteristic type of the Breton race, in which the Gallic blood and language have been perpetuated almost unmixed to our day. A good-natured smile lurked on the full, rosy lips of M. Lebrenn, mingled at times with an expression of subtle irony. We shall complete the picture by saying that he was dressed in a large blue paletot and gray trowsers. George Duchêne, astonished and almost dumfoundered by this unexpected visit, waited in silence for the linen-draper to begin the conversation.

"My dear George," said Lebrenn, "six months ago you were employed by your master to execute certain tasks in my shop, and I was highly pleased with your skill and intelligence."

"The kindness which you showed me proved as much, sir."

"You earned it. I saw that you were industrious and desirous to learn; I knew, besides, like all the neighbors, of your praiseworthy conduct toward your old grandfather, who has lived in this house for the last fifteen years."

"Sir," said George, embarrassed by these praises, "my conduct—"

"Is very natural, you would say. Well, so be it. Your employment in my shop lasted three months. I was greatly pleased with our acquaintanceship, and said to you, cordially, 'George, we are neighbors; come and see me on Sunday or any other day after your work is finished; you will give me pleasure, great pleasure.'"

"Indeed, sir, you were so kind as to say so."

"And yet, George, you have never since set foot in my house."

"I entreat you, sir, to attribute my reserve neither to ingratitude nor forgetfulness."

"To what then?"

"Sir—"

"Stop, George, be frank, you love my daughter."

The young man started, changed color,

In our days, the decisive battle was fought; it was called the Revolution. Franks and Gauls, lords and peasants, nobles and plebeians, all had alike called themselves Frenchmen long before this revolution, and had alike had France for their country. Thirteen centuries had been employed in blending the conquering and the conquered races, the victors and the vanquished, into one nation; but the primitive difference had continued through the ages and resisted their influence; the struggle had continued through every century, under every possible form and with every possible weapon, and when in 1789 deputies from all France met in one assembly, the two nations hastened to take up the old quarrel. The time had come to settle the question."

and, after hesitating for some moments, replied in a voice of emotion, "It is true, sir."

"So that, your work finished, you did not visit us for fear of falling more deeply in love."

"Yes, sir."

"Have you never spoken of this love to my daughter?"

"Never, sir."

"I knew it. But why did you lack confidence in me, George?"

"Sir," replied the young man, with embarrassment, "I dared not."

"Why not? because I am a tradesman—a rich man compared with you who live by your daily labor?"

"Yes, sir."

After a moment's silence, the linen-draper resumed, "Permit me to ask you a question, which you need not answer unless you see fit."

"Willingly, sir."

"About fifteen months ago, some time after your return from the army, were you on the point of being married?"

"Yes, sir."

"To a young artificial-flower maker, an orphan, by the name of Josephine Eloi?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you tell me why this marriage did not take place?"

The young man blushed, his features contracted painfully, and he hesitated to reply. Lebrenn observed him attentively. Troubled and surprised at his silence, he could not refrain from exclaiming, bitterly and harshly, "Is it so? First seduction, then abandonment and forgetfulness? Your agitation but too well shows it."

"You are mistaken, sir," exclaimed George, eagerly, "my agitation and emotion are caused by cruel memories. I will tell you the reason; I never lie."

"I know it, George."

"Josephine lived in the same house with my employer; it was in this way that I became acquainted with her. She was very beautiful and, though without education, full of natural talent. I knew that she was accustomed to labor and poverty, and I believed her virtuous. I was tired of a lonely life; I thought, besides, of my grandfather; a woman would aid me in taking care of him. I offered myself, therefore, to Josephine; she appeared delighted, and herself fixed the wedding-day. And those, sir, who told you of seduction and abandonment, lied!"

"I believe you," said Lebrenn, cordially extending his hand to the young man. "I am glad to believe you; but why was the marriage broken off?"

"A week before the time appointed, Josephine disappeared, writing to me that all between us was ended. I have since learned that, yielding to the evil counsels of a lost female friend, she had followed her example. Having always lived in poverty and suffered severe privations, in spite of twelve or fifteen hours of daily labor, Josephine shrunk from the life I offered her—a life as laborious and poor as her own."

"And like so many others," said Lebrenn, "she succumbed to the temptation of a less painful mode of life. Ah! poverty, poverty!"

"I have never since seen Josephine, sir. I am told that she is now one of the leading dancers at the public balls. She has changed her name for a nickname given her from the habit that she has of aptly improvising ballads. In short, she is lost forever. Yet she had an excellent heart. Now, sir, you understand the cause of my emotion just now, when you spoke of Josephine."

"This emotion does credit to your heart, George. You have been slandered; I suspected it—now I am certain. Let us say no more about it. Now, listen to what happened three days ago at my house. I was spending the evening with my wife and daughter. For some time, Velleda appeared pensive; then, suddenly taking my hand and her mother's, 'I have something to confide to you,' said she; 'I have long deferred it, in order to have time for reflection and to be sure that I did not speak hastily—I love George Duchêne.'"

"Good heavens! sir," cried George, clasping his hands with inexpressible joy. "Is it possible your daughter loves me?"

"That was what Velleda said," replied Lebrenn, tranquilly. "'I thank you for your frankness, my daughter,' I answered, 'but how did this love originate?' 'In the first place, father, from learning of George's conduct toward his grandfather, then from hearing you praise his character, his industrious habits, his intelligence, and his efforts to instruct himself. Then his polite and gentle manners, his frankness, and his conversation won my heart. I have never said a word to him that could make him suspect my love, and he on his side has never gone beyond the bounds of respectful reserve; but how happy I should be if he shared the feeling which I have for him, and if this marriage suited your wishes! Should it be otherwise, I shall respect your will, knowing that you will respect my liberty. If I do not marry George Duchêne, I shall never marry. You have often told me, father, that I had character; you will therefore believe in my resolution. If this marriage is impossible, you will neither see me peevish nor sad; your affection will console me; happy as in the past, I shall grow old by your side. This is the truth; now decide.'"

George had listened to Lebrenn with increasing amazement, unable to believe what he heard. At last he stammered, "Sir, is this a dream?"

"No; my daughter, I assure you, was never more wide awake than at that moment; I know her frankness and firmness. My wife and I are sure that, if this marriage does not take place, Velleda's affection for us will never change, but she will never marry. Now, it is natural that a young and beautiful girl of eighteen should marry, and as the choice which Velleda has made is worthy of her and of us, my wife and I decided, after mature reflection, that we might accept you as a son-in-law."

It is impossible to describe the expression of intoxicating joy depicted on George's features as he listened to the linen-draper's words. He stood mute, as if struck with amazement.

"Come, George," resumed Lebrenn, smiling; "what is there so extraordinary and incredible in what I have said? For three months, you were at work in my shop, and before that time, I knew that you had enlisted as a soldier to secure a subsistence for your grandfather. Your rank as sub-lieutenant and two wounds prove that you served with honor. During your stay at my house, I was enabled to perceive—and I do not lack discernment—your worth, your intelligence, and your skill in your vocation. Delighted with your acquaintance, I urged you to visit me frequently; and your reserve on this point is a new proof of your delicacy. But, above all, my daughter loves you, and you love her. You are twenty-seven, she is eighteen. She is charming, and you are a handsome young fellow. You are poor, but I have enough for you both. You are a mechanic, so was my father. Why the deuce should you be so surprised? Does it seem like a fairy tale?"

These friendly words did not put an end to the amazement of George, who really thought himself in fairy-land, as the shop-keeper had said. With moist eyes and beating heart, he could only stammer, "Ah! sir, forgive my confusion, but I am so stunned with happiness at having heard from your lips that you consent to my marriage."

"Wait a moment," interrupted Lebrenn; "observe that, despite my good opinion of you, I only said that we had decided that we *might* take you as our son-in-law. It was conditional, and the conditions were these: first, that you should clear yourself from the charge of seduction falsely brought against you."

"Sir, have I not sworn to you that it is untrue?"

"Yes, and I believe you; I only speak of this first condition to recall it to memory. As to the second, for there are two—"

"And what is this condition, sir?" asked George, with indescribable anxiety, beginning to fear that he had indulged in false hopes.

"Listen to me, George. We have talked little about politics; when you were at work at my house, the conversation turned chiefly on the history of our fathers. I have heard, however, that you hold advanced opinions—in short, that you are a Republican Socialist."

"I have heard you say, sir, that every sincere opinion was honorable."

"I do not retract my words, I do not blame you; but there is a wide abyss between the desire to make your opinions prevail peaceably and the design to insure their triumph by force; is there not?"

"Yes," replied the young man, looking at the shop-keeper with an air of surprise and anxiety.

"Now, an armed demonstration is never attempted alone; is it?"

"Sir," said the young man with embarrassment, "I do not know."

"Yes, you must know that usually these men fraternize with those of the same opinion—in a word, that they belong to secret societies, and that when an outbreak occurs, they swell its ranks; do they not?"

"I know, sir, that it was in this way that the revolution of 1830 was effected," replied George, his heart wrung more and more.

"Certainly," returned Lebrenn, "it was in this way that it was effected, as others will probably be also. Nevertheless, as revolutions, like insurrections, are not always successful, and as those engaged in them risk their heads, you can understand, George, that my wife and I are not inclined to give our daughter to a man who no longer belongs to himself, but who is liable to be called upon at any moment to take up arms with the secret society of which he is a member, and to risk his life like a man of faith and conviction. This is noble and heroic, I admit; the objection to it is that the Chamber of Peers, not appreciating this kind of heroism, send the conspirators to Mount St. Michel, if they do not cut off their heads. Now, I ask you in good faith, George, would it not be sad for a young wife to be constantly in danger of having a husband either headless or a prisoner for life?"

George turned pale, struck with consternation. "Sir, one word," he stammered forth.

"Stop! in an instant I shall have done," returned the shop-keeper; then he added in a grave, almost solemn voice, "George, I have blind faith in your word, as I have proved to you; swear to me that you do not belong to any secret society; I will believe you, and you shall become my son-in-law, or rather my son," added Lebrenn, extending his hand to George, "for since I have known and appreciated you, I have always felt for you, I repeat, as much interest as sympathy."

The praises and cordiality of the linen-draper rendered the blow still heavier that dashed George's hopes to the ground. Courageous and energetic as he was, his limbs gave way, he covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears. Lebrenn looked at him commiseratingly, and said in a voice of emotion, "I am waiting for your oath, George."

The young man turned aside his head to wipe his tears, then rose, saying, "I cannot take the oath that you require."

"Then, your marriage with my daughter—"

"Must be renounced by me, sir," answered George, with a smothered sob.

"Then, George," resumed the linen-draper, "you admit that you belong to a secret society?"

The young man's silence was his sole reply.

"Well," said Lebrenn, rising with a sigh of regret, "all is ended. Happily, my daughter has courage."

"I shall strive, sir, to have the same."

"George," said Lebrenn, extending his hand, "you are a man of honor; I need not ask you to be silent respecting this conversation. You see that I entertain the most friendly feelings toward you; it is not my fault if my projects—I will say more, my desires—encounter an insurmountable obstacle."

"Never, sir, shall I forget the mark of esteem with which you have just honored me. You act with the wisdom and prudence of a father, and, however much I may suffer from it, I respect your determination. I ought even, I know, to have anticipated your question, and told you of the sacred pledge that bound me to my party. Doubtless, I should have made you this confession on recovering from my intoxication, and reflecting on the duties imposed on me by this unhoped-for happiness, this union. But forgive me, sir," added George, with a tearful voice, "I have no longer the right to speak of this beautiful dream. I shall always, however, remember with pride that you have said to me, you might have been my son."

"Well, George, I expected nothing less of you," said Lebrenn, advancing toward the door; then, holding out his hand to the young man, he added, in a tremulous voice, "Once more, adieu."

"Adieu, sir," said George, taking the extended hand of the linen-draper. But the latter, with a sudden movement, drew the young man to his breast, saying, with moist eyes and a voice full of emotion, "Come, George! honest man! noble heart! I judged you rightly."

George looked at Lebrenn with amazement, unable to utter a word; but the latter said in a low voice, "Six weeks ago, in the Rue de Lourcine—"

George started, and cried with an air of alarm, "What, sir?"

"Number seventeen, on the fourth floor, at the end of the court—"

"Sir, again I beg of you—"

"An artisan, by the name of Dupont, introduced you, with your eyes bandaged—"

"Sir, I cannot reply to you."

"Five members of a secret society received you. You took the customary oath, and were conducted back, with your eyes still bandaged."

"Sir," cried George, as stupefied as frightened by this revelation, and endeavoring to regain his coolness, "I know not what you mean."

"I presided over the committee that evening, my brave George."

"You, sir?" exclaimed George, still hesitating to believe Lebrenn.

"I myself." And seeing George's incredulity, he resumed, "Yes, it was I that presided; I will prove it to you." He whispered a few words in the ear of George who, unable longer to doubt the truth, cried, "But then, sir, what was the meaning of the oath you just required of me?"

"It was a last trial."

"A trial!"

"You must pardon me, my good George. Fathers are so distrustful! Thank God! you have not disappointed my expectations. You have bravely passed through the ordeal; you have preferred the ruin of your dearest hopes to a falsehood, though you were certain that I should blindly believe your words, whatever they might be."

"Sir," resumed George, with a hesitation that affected the linen-draper, "this time may I believe, may I hope with certainty? I entreat you to tell me. If you knew what I suffered just now!"

"On my word as an honest man, my dear George, my daughter loves you, and my wife and I consent to your marriage, which delights us, because we see therein a happy future for our child. Is that clear?"

"Ah! sir," cried George, warmly clasping the hand of the shop-keeper, who resumed:

"As to the precise time of your marriage, my dear George, the events of yesterday, those which are preparing to-day, and the course taken by our secret society—"

"You, sir!" cried George, unable to refrain from interrupting Lebrenn to testify his surprise, a moment forgotten in the intoxication of joy, "you, sir, a member of our secret society—can it be possible?"

"Come," returned Lebrenn, smiling, "my brave George's surprise is beginning anew. But why should I not be a member of this secret society? Is it because, without being rich, I have some money and a house of my own? What have I to do, you would ask,

in a party the end of which is to open the way for the masses to political life by means of universal suffrage and to the possession of property by means of the organization of labor? Well, my dear George, it is just because I possess these things, that it is my duty to aid my brethren who do not possess them to gain them."

"These are generous sentiments," cried George; "the case is rare that men who have attained their goal by dint of toil, turn back to lend a helping hand to their less fortunate brethren."

"No, George, the case is not rare. And when, in a few hours, perhaps, you see our society, of which I have long been one of the leaders, rush to arms, you will find therein merchants, artists, manufacturers, literary men, scholars, physicians, citizens,* in short, living for the most part like me, in modest competency, having no ambition, wishing for nothing but the elevation of their brethren of the people, and desirous to lay down their muskets after the conflict, to return to their laborious and peaceful life."

"Ah! sir, how surprised and happy I am at what you tell me!"

"Surprised again! Poor George! And why? because there are citizens who are republican socialists? Reflect seriously, and see whether the cause of the citizens is not allied to that of the masses. May not I, for instance, who was one of the latter yesterday, by a stroke of ill-luck return to their condition to-morrow? or may not my son do so after me? Are not all we petty tradesmen at the discretion of the lords of the strong box, as our fathers were at the mercy of the lords of the castles? Are not the small proprietors as completely subjugated by these dukes of mortgage, these marquises of usury, and these counts of stockjobbing? Are not we traders, in spite of probity, industry, economy and intelligence, daily exposed to ruin at the least crisis, when, through fear, cupidity, or despotic caprice, it pleases the autocrats of capital to refuse us credit and reject our signatures, however honorable they may be? If this credit, instead of being monopolized by the few, were organized in a democratic manner by the State, as it should and will be, should we be continually exposed to ruin from the sudden withdrawal of capital, the usurious rate of discount, or the consequences of a pitiless competition? Are not all of us old men to-day on the brink of seeing ourselves in a position as precarious as that of your grandfather, an invalid of toil, who, after thirty years of industry and probity, would have died of want had it not been for your devotion, my dear George? And once ruined like so many other tradesmen, have I the certainty that my son will find means to earn his daily bread, or that he will not be subject, like you, George—like all the masses—to the homicidal stoppage of work which makes you die of slow starvation? Would not my daughter?—but no, I know her; she would kill herself first. In short, how many poor young persons, brought up in ease, and whose fathers were humble tradesmen like me, have been plunged by the ruin of their family into horrible destitution, and sometimes, through this destitution, into the depths of vice, like that young working-woman whom you were on the point of marrying? No, no, George, the intelligent citizens—and they are numerous—do not separate their cause from that of their brethren of the masses; they have fought side by side for centuries to regain their liberty; their blood has mingled to cement the holy union of the conquered against the conquerors—of the weak and friendless against power and privilege. Why, in short, should not the citizens and the masses have common interests? They have always had the same enemies. But enough of politics, George; let us talk of you and my daughter. A word more, however, on a serious matter. The agitation in Paris commenced last evening; this morning it is at its height; our sections are warned, and are momentarily expecting a call to arms. Did you know it?"

"Yes, I was apprised yesterday."

"This evening or to-night we shall take up arms. My wife and daughter know nothing about it, not that I distrust them," added Lebrenn, smiling, "they are true Gauls, worthy of our mothers, those heroic women, who cheered on their fathers, brothers, sons and husbands, by voice and gesture, in the battle. But you know our laws; they enjoin on us absolute silence. Within three days, George, the throne of Louis Philippe will be overthrown or our party will be once more defeated, but not discouraged. The future is ours. In this uprising, my friend, you or I may fall at the barricade."

"Such are the chances of war, sir; may you be spared!"

"To tell my daughter in advance that you love her and that I consent to your marriage, would be to double her regret, should you fall."

"It is true."

"I ask you, therefore, George, to await the issue of the crisis before speaking to her. Should I fall, my wife will know my last wishes; they are that you should marry Velleda."

"Sir," said George, in a voice of deep emotion, "my feelings at this moment are

* By citizens here are meant the *bourgeois* or burghers, or those who enjoy certain political rights and municipal privileges, from which the masses are debarred.

inexpressible. I can only say, Yes, I will be worthy of your daughter, I will be worthy of you; the greatness of the obligation does not appall me; believe me, sir, my heart and life will suffice to repay it."

"I believe you, my brave George," returned the tradesman, affectionately pressing the young man's hand. "One word more—have you arms?"

"I have a musket concealed here, and fifty cartridges, which I have made during the night."

"If the conflict begins to-night, as it must inevitably do, we will barricade the street as high up as my house. The post is an excellent one, and we possess several magazines of arms and powder. I went this morning to visit the ammunition, which was reported to have been discovered by the police spies, but such was not the case. At the first signal, return home; I will inform you, and huzza for the barricades! Tell me, is your grandfather to be trusted?"

"I will answer for him as for myself."

"Is he in his room?"

"Yes."

"Well, let me give him a great happiness." Lebrenn entered the room of the old man, who was still occupied in smoking his pipe, like a pacha, as he said. "My good sir," said the linen-draper, "your grandson is so good and generous-hearted that I have given him my daughter, with whom he is madly in love. I only ask you to keep the secret for a few days, after which you will have the right to hope to see yourself a great-grandfather and I a grandfather. George will explain matters to you. Farewell." And, leaving George with the old man, Lebrenn directed his steps toward the house of M. de Plouernel, colonel of dragoons, who was expecting the merchant that morning to make arrangements with him for the purchase of a large supply of ready-made linen.

CHAPTER IV.

Gontran Neroweg, the Count de Plouernel, occupied a charming little house in the Rue de Paradis-Poissonière, built by his grandfather. From the somewhat studied elegance of this habitation, it was easy to see that it must have been built in the last century, in the time of the Regency.

M. de Plouernel was breakfasting alone with an extremely pretty girl, a witty and merry brunette of about twenty, who had been nicknamed Pradeline, from her habit, in the suppers of which she was the life and soul, and often the queen, of improvising songs on all sorts of subjects, which doubtless would not have been acknowledged by the celebrated improvisatrice whose name she bore, but which were not lacking in point or gayety. M. de Plouernel, having heard of Pradeline, had invited her to sup with him and some friends the evening before. After the supper, which was prolonged till three o'clock in the morning, the offer of hospitality was a matter of course, which was naturally followed by breakfast. The two companions were seated in a little Louis XV. boudoir, adjoining the alcove, a bright fire was burning in an exquisitely sculptured chimney-piece, thick curtains of pale blue damask, brocaded with roses, softened the light of day, and the air was heavy with the fragrance of the flowers that filled the great porcelain vases. The wines were fine and the dishes exquisite. Pradeline and M. de Plouernel did full justice to them.

The colonel was a man of about thirty-eight, tall, slender and well made; his features, a little haggard, but possessing a sort of haughty beauty, presented the type of the Germanic or Frankish race — the characteristic traits of which are so often described by Tacitus and Cæsar—with light brown hair, red moustache, clear gray eyes, and hooked nose. M. de Plouernel, wrapped in a magnificent dressing-gown, appeared as merry as his companion. "Come, Pradeline," said he, pouring out for her a bumper of old Burgundy, "to the health of your lover!"

"What folly! as though I had a lover!"

"You are right. To the health of your lovers!"

"You are not jealous, then, my dear?"

"And you?"

At this question, Pradeline slowly drained her glass, then clinking it against her knife-blade, she answered the Colonel by improvising these lines to the popular air of "La Rifla:"

"Here's to fidelity!
I laugh at it merrily;
When a lover pleases me,
Ah! then we soon shall see,
La rifla, fla, fla."

"Bravo! my dear!" cried the colonel, laughing heartily; and, joining in the chorus with Pradeline, he sang, clinking his glass,

"When a lover pleases me,
Ah! then we soon shall see,
La rifla, fla, fla."

"But since you are not jealous, my dear," resumed he, after this chorus, "give me your advice?"

"What?"

"A friendly counsel; I am in love, madly in love."

"Bah!"

"It is true, nevertheless; I am madly in

love with a shop-girl; that is to say, her father and mother keep a shop."

"Well."

"You must know the manners and customs of this sort of people; what means would you advise me to employ to succeed?"

"Make yourself beloved."

"That would take too long. When I take a violent fancy, it is impossible for me to wait."

"Really! It is surprising, my dear, how you interest me. But let us see. This shop-girl—in the first place, is she very poor? is she very wretched? is she very hungry?"

"Is she very hungry? What the deuce do you mean?"

"Colonel, I don't deny your agreeable qualities; you are handsome, witty, charming, fascinating, adorable, and delightful—"

"You are sarcastic!"

"Ah! as if I dared! You are delightful, therefore; but for the poor girl to appreciate you, she must be dying of hunger. You have no idea how hunger helps to show off your agreeable qualities." And Pradeline improvised anew, not this time merrily, but with a sort of bitterness, slackening the measure of her favorite air until it seemed almost melancholy:

"Thou'rt dying of hunger
And freezing with cold,
Oh! come to my dwelling
And thou wilt find gold.
La rifla, fla, fla."

"The deuce! Your song is anything but merry this time," said M. de Plouernel, struck by the melancholy tone of the young girl, who, however, soon recovered her usual carelessness and gayety. "I understand the allusion," resumed the Count, "but my pretty shop-girl does not want for bread."

"Then is she coquettish? does she like dress, jewels, and plays? These are capital means of ruining a poor girl."

"She must naturally like all these; but she has a father and mother, therefore must be closely watched. I also have an idea—"

"Ah! I thought so. And what is it?"

"To make large purchases of these people, and even to lend them money in case of need, for these small tradesmen are always hard pressed."

"So that you think that they will sell their daughter for ready money?"

"No, but I hope at least that they will shut their eyes; then I can dazzle the little girl with gifts, and soon accomplish my purpose. Eh! what do you think of it?"

"Why, I don't know what to say," replied Pradeline, putting on an innocent air. "If men sell their daughters in this way in your fashionable world, perhaps it is done also among humble people. I don't believe it, however; they are too vulgar, too ungenteel for such traffic."

"My dear," said M. de Plouernel, haughtily, "do you know that you are taking great liberties?"

At this reproach, the young girl burst into a fit of laughter, followed by a fresh improvisation, merrily sung:

"Behold this great seignior,
So proud of his honor!
For this chivalrous lord
A rascal's the word.
La rifla, fla, fla."

With these words, Pradeline rose, took a cigar from the mantel, lighted it — still murmuring her chorus—and throwing herself into an easy-chair, puffed a column of blueish smoke toward the ceiling. M. de Plouernel, forgetting his momentary spite, could not help laughing at the young girl's originality. "Come," said he, "talk seriously; it is not singing that I need, but advice."

"In the first place, I must know in what neighborhood your charmer lives," returned Pradeline, in a dogmatic tone, throwing herself back in her chair; "the knowledge of the neighborhood is very important. What can be done in one neighborhood cannot be done in another."

"Well reasoned, my dear; the influence of the neighborhood on the virtue of women is great. I can tell you thus much, that my adored shop-girl lives in the Rue St. Denis."

At these words, Pradeline, who till then had been indolently reclining in her easy-chair, puffing the smoke of her cigar in fantastic shapes, started, and sprang up so suddenly that M. de Plouernel, looking at her with surprise, cried, "What is the matter?"

"Why," she replied, recovering her coolness, and wringing her hand with an expression of pain, "in fact I have burned myself horribly with this cigar; but it is nothing. You were saying that your charmer lives in the Rue St. Denis—that is something, but not enough."

"At all events, my dear, you will know no more."

"This confounded cigar!" exclaimed the young girl, wringing her hand anew, "it burns, oh! how it burns!"

"Will you have some cold water?"

"No, it will pass away. So your shop-girl lives in the Rue St. Denis. But wait a moment, is it at the upper or the lower end of the street? for there is a vast difference between them, as is proved by the prices at the shops. Now, the generosity must be in proportion to the rate of the rent; isn't that reasonable?"

"Very reasonable; I will tell you, then,

that my charmer lives not far from the Porte St. Denis."

"That is all I need to know in order to give my advice," replied Pradeline, in a tone which she vainly strove to render gay; but a more observing man than M. de Plouernel would have remarked a vague anxiety in the expression of her face.

"Well, let us see; what do you advise me to do?" asked he.

"In the first place, you must——Some one is knocking."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it. There, don't you hear?" Another knock was heard.

"Come in!" cried the Count.

A servant appeared and said, with an air of embarrassment, "Sir, His Eminence is here."

"My uncle!" exclaimed the Count, starting up in surprise.

"Yes, sir, the Cardinal has just returned from a journey, and—"

"A cardinal!" cried Pradeline, interrupting the servant by a burst of laughter, for she had already forgotten her anxiety; "a cardinal! that's jolly; it is what we don't see every day at the Mabille or Valentino. A cardinal! I never saw one, now I will feast my eyes!" and she began to improvise to her favorite air,

"The merry queen bacchanal,
Seeing a cardinal,
Cried, Now is the chance
To show him a dance,
La rifla, fla, fla."

With these words, the reckless girl, raising the skirt of her dress, began waltzing around the room, repeating her song, while the servant stood motionless at the half-open door, with great difficulty preserving his gravity, and M. de Plouernel, incensed at the young girl's boldness, cried, "Enough of this folly! be quiet; it is indecent!"

Meanwhile the Cardinal de Plouernel, who had just been announced, tired of waiting in his nephew's ante-room, and not expecting to find himself in such profane company, had followed close upon the servant, and entered just as Pradeline, balancing on one toe, sang,

"Now is the chance
To show him a dance."

At the sight of the cardinal, M. de Plouernel ran to the door, and, while embracing his uncle, pushed him back gently into the next room. The servant, like a well-trained domestic, discreetly shut the door of the boudoir on his master, and drew the bolt.

CHAPTER V.

The Cardinal de Plouernel was a man of sixty-five, tall, thin and bony. He presented the same type of face as his nephew, allowance being made for the difference of age. His long neck, his bald crown, his large hooked nose, and his round and piercing eyes, set wide apart, gave his features, when analyzed and separated from the lofty intellect which seemed to animate them, a strange analogy to the physiognomy of the vulture. In short, this priest, draped in the crimson robes of the princes of the church, must have presented a majestic appearance. On his visit to his nephew, he was simply dressed in a long black frock-coat, buttoned closely to the chin.

"Forgive me, my dear uncle," said the colonel, smiling. "Not knowing of your return, I was not expecting your kind and early visit, and—"

The cardinal was not a man to be astonished at finding a colonel of dragoons in such company; he only said, in his quick, decided tone, "I am in haste, let us talk of business. I have just come from a long tour through France. We are on the brink of a revolution."

"What do you say?" cried the colonel, in an incredulous tone. "Do you really think so?"

"I believe that it is close upon us."

"But, uncle—"

"Have you funds at your command? If not, I can accommodate you."

"Funds! for what?"

"To convert them into gold or bills of exchange on London; these would be more convenient for your journey."

"What journey?"

"That which you will take with me. We shall set out to-night."

"Set out—to-night!"

"Would you rather serve under a republic?"

"A republic!" exclaimed M. de Plouernel, as if in a dream; "what republic?"

"That which will shortly be proclaimed here at Paris, after the downfall of Louis Philippe."

"The downfall of Louis Philippe! A republic, in France, and shortly!"

"Yes, the French Republic, one and indivisible, proclaimed for our benefit. Only we must have the patience to wait." And the cardinal smiled mysteriously, as he inhaled a pinch of snuff.

The count looked at him with amazement. "What, uncle," he at length resumed, "are you in earnest?"

"Ah! my poor Gontran, are you deaf and blind?" replied the cardinal, shrugging his shoulders. "What do you think of the revolutionary banquets that have been going on in France for the last three months?"

"Ah! uncle," said the count, laughing, "do you believe those swillers of thin wine, those eaters of veal at twenty cents a head, capable of—"

"These simpletons—not that I blame them for it, by any means—have turned the heads of the fools that listened to them. There is nothing so senseless as gunpowder, but that does not hinder it from exploding. Well, these banqueters have been playing with powder; the mine is about to explode, and blow up the throne of the house of Orleans."

"There is no real danger, uncle. There are fifty thousand troops here; if the rabble stirs, it will be cut to pieces. There is so little uneasiness about the state of Paris, that, despite the disturbances of yesterday, the troops are not even kept in the barracks."

"Is that so? Well, so much the better," returned the cardinal, rubbing his hands. "If it is struck with madness, this house of Orleans will the sooner give way to a republic, and our turn will the more speedily come." Here his Eminence was interrupted by a couple of gentle knocks on the door opening into the boudoir; this sound was quickly followed by the words, sung to the air of La rifla,

"Before quitting this dwelling,
Pray give me your blessing:
Absolution,
Benediction.
La rifla, fla, fla."

"O uncle!" cried the colonel, angrily, "pray treat this silly girl's insolence with the contempt that it deserves." And, rising, he took a shawl and hat from the sofa, and, ringing furiously, threw them at the servant, saying, "Give her these things, and send her away directly." Then, turning to the cardinal, who stood unmoved, opening his snuff-box, "Indeed," said he, "I am extremely annoyed; but these little fools respect no one."

"The little girl is very pretty," replied the cardinal, taking a pinch of snuff. "In the fifteenth century, we should have roasted her like a Jewess for her impertinence. But patience. Ah! never, never, my boy, have we had such fair prospects!"

"Such fair prospects if the house of Orleans is expelled and the republic proclaimed!"

"One of two things must happen," returned the cardinal, shrugging his shoulders; "either the republic of these ragamuffins will be anarchy, dictatorship, emigration, pillage, assignats, the guillotine and a European war, which will last for six months, after which our glorious Henri V. will be brought back by the Holy Alliance, or else, on the contrary, their republic will be benign, stupid, legal, and moderate, with universal suffrage as its basis."

"And in this case, uncle?"

"In this case, it will take longer, but we shall lose nothing by waiting. By using our influence with the large proprietors and acting through the lower clergy on the peasants, we shall become masters of the elections, we shall have the majority in the legislature, we shall throw obstacles in the way of every measure that would tend to make this horrible and revolutionary state of affairs not only beloved, but tolerated, we shall sow distrust and fear in the minds of all, and ere long we shall bring about destruction of credit, general ruin, universal disaster, and a chorus of maledictions against this infamous republic which will die a natural death after a trial which will disgust the people with it forever. Then we shall appear on the scene; and the famished masses and terrified citizens, throwing themselves at our feet, will entreat us with clasped hands to restore them Henri V., the only salvation of France. Now comes the time for making our conditions, which will be these: royalty as it was before 1789 at least—that is to say, no insolent and turbulent chamber of the Third Estate, as powerful as the King himself, since it has him in its power, by means of the taxes, an ignoble means of constraint; no bastard system, but all or nothing, and we are determined to have all—namely, a king, by absolute and divine right, supported by an all-powerful clergy, a strong aristocracy, and a pitiless army—a hundred thousand or two hundred thousand foreign troops if necessary; the Holy Alliance will lend them to us. The wretchedness will be so horrible, the fear so intense, and the despondency so great, that our conditions will no sooner be offered than accepted. Then we shall speedily take prompt and terrible measures which alone can be effectual; courts of high commission, an investigation into the crimes of sacrilege and high treason committed since 1830, with judgment and execution within twenty-four hours, in order to crush out the venom of the impious revolutionists, a reign of terror, a St. Bartholomew if necessary. France will not die of it; on the contrary, she is too full-blooded and needs to be bled freely from time to time. Next, public instruction must be given to the Jesuits—they alone can humble the people; then the rampart of centralization must be broken down—this it is which gives vigor to the revolutionary spirit. The provinces must be isolated and converted into petty centers, where we alone shall rule through the clergy or our large estates; and the intercourse of the people with each other must be restricted as much as possible. It is not for our interest to encourage friendly intercourse among the people; to divide them, we must stir up rivalries, jealousies, and old local feuds in case of need. In this connection, a spice of civil war would be a good expedient, as a germ of implacable animosity." Then, taking a pinch of snuff,

the cardinal added, "Men that hate each other never conspire."

The pitiless logic of the cardinal was repugnant to M. de Plouernel. Despite his aristocratic infatuation and prejudices, he was very well contented with the existing state of things; he would have doubtless preferred the reign of the legitimate kings, but he did not reflect that to obtain the end we must take the means, and that a complete and absolute restoration, to be lasting in the eyes of its partisans, could only be effected and maintained by the terrible measures which his uncle had just set forth so complacently. He replied, therefore, with a smile, "But reflect, my dear uncle; to isolate the different parts of the country from each other in our day is impossible; look at the highways and the railroads!"

"Railroads!" exclaimed the cardinal, angrily, "an invention of the devil, only fit to carry the revolutionary pestilence from one end of Europe to the other! Our holy father will not have a railroad in his states, and he is right. It is unheard-of blindness in the monarchs of the Holy Alliance to let themselves be persuaded to sanction this diabolical invention, which may cost them dear. How did our ancestors set to work, at the time of the Conquest, to tame and subjugate those wicked Gauls, our vassals by birth and race, who so often rebelled against us? They penned them up on their estates, forbidding them to cross their bounds under penalty of death. Thus chained to the globe, thus isolated and brutalized, the race was more tractable. It is to this that we must come."

"But, once more, uncle, you surely would not destroy the highways and railroads?"

"Why not? Did not our ancestors, the Franks, in pursuance of a sagacious policy, destroy these great means of communication established in Gaul by those pagans, the Romans? Would it not be an easy matter to incite the ignorant wretches who have been thrown out of employment by this infernal invention to tear up the railroads? Accursed be these arrogant monuments of the pride of Satan! By the blood of my race! if man is not arrested in his sacrilegious inventions, he will end by transforming this vale of tears into an earthly paradise, as if he were not condemned by original sin to suffer through all eternity."

"In heaven's name, hear me a moment," cried the colonel; "I, for my part, am not anxious to so scrupulously fulfill my destiny."

"Foolish child!" said the cardinal, taking a pinch of snuff; "for the great majority of the race of Adam to suffer and have a meritorious consciousness of their suffering, must there not always be a considerable minority of happy men before their eyes in this world?"

"I understand; by way of contrast, you would say."

"Necessarily. We perceive the depth of the valleys only by the height of the mountains. But enough of philosophizing. You know that I am a man of quick and sure perception; the state of affairs is just as I tell you. I repeat, follow my example, turn all your disposable property into gold or bills on London, send in your resignation to-day, and leave with me to-morrow. The blindness of these men is such that they fear nothing; you acknowledge this yourself. Scarcely any military precautions have been taken; you can therefore quit your regiment and accompany me without the least imputation on your honor as a soldier."

"I am a soldier, and I intend to do my duty as such to the end."

"But, obstinate boy, if you are killed, our house falls from the sword to the distaff."

"I have promised you, my dear uncle, to marry when I am forty."

"But reflect! this street warfare is horrible—to die in a gutter, massacred by a ragged mob!"

"I shall have the satisfaction at least of putting a few of them to the sword, and if I fall," added the colonel, laughing, "you can easily find some little illegitimate Plouernel of mine whom you can adopt, and who will continue our name; such children often bring happiness to great families."

"Triple fool! thus to stake your life just when our future is at its brightest—when, after being conquered, trampled upon, and derided by the sons of those who were our vassals and serfs for fourteen centuries, we are about to efface fifty years of shame at one blow—when, taught by experience and served by circumstances, we are about to become more powerful than before 1789! You inspire me with pity. You are right—races degenerate," cried the intractable old man, rising. "Our cause would be desperate if all its friends were like you."

A knock was heard. The servant entered and said to M. de Plouernel, "Sir, the linen-draper from the Rue St. Denis is waiting in the ante-room."

"Take him into the picture-gallery," answered the count; "I will be there in a moment." The servant went out. "For heaven's sake, my dear uncle," exclaimed M. de Plouernel, seeing the cardinal take his hat abruptly and move toward the door, "do not leave me in anger."

"I am not angry, but humiliated, for you bear our name."

"Wait a moment, my dear uncle; when you are calmer, you will see—"

"Will you go to England with me? yes or no."

"Impossible."

"Then go to the devil!" cried the cardinal, very unclerically, as he rushed from the room furiously and slammed the door after him.

Lebrenn had been conducted, by the count's orders, into a richly furnished room, the walls of which were hung with numerous family portraits. Some wore the cuirass of knights, the red cloak and white cross of Templars, the doublet of noblemen, the ermine of peers of France, or bore the staff of marshals, and a few the purple of the princes of the church. Among the women, many wore the monastic habit or the court costume; but, whether each painter had scrupulously copied nature or had flattered the wishes of a family that was anxious to show an unbroken ancestry, the generic type of these different faces was found in all, whether handsome or ugly; in all, the wide space between the eyes and the hooked nose called to mind a bird of prey. The Plouernel arms and the name of the original were painted in the corner of almost all the ancient portraits. For instance, there might have been read, Gonthramn IX., Sieur de Plouernel; Hildeberta, Lady de Plouernel; Merofleda, Abbess of Moriadek in Plouernel, etc. The sight of these family portraits seemed to inspire Lebrenn with a strange mixture of curiosity, bitterness and reproach, more sad than rancorous; he went from one to another, as if they awakened a thousand memories in him, and gazed pensively at the motionless figures, as mute as spectres. Several of these personages seemed especially to excite his attention. One, evidently painted from traditions and recollections handed down to a later date than that of the picture, A.D. 497, was, without doubt, the founder of this ancient house; in the corner was written the name of Gonthramn Neroweg. This personage was a man of colossal stature. His hair, of a bright copper red,* was turned back in the Chinese fashion and fastened by means of a gold ring at the top of his head, from which it fell over his shoulders like a flowing mane. His cheeks and chin were shaved, but his long moustaches, of the same color as his hair, fell to his breast, which was tattooed blue and half covered by a variegated red and yellow mantle or plaid. It was impossible to conceive of a more savage and barbarous countenance than that of this first Neroweg. At its sight, painful thoughts seemed to agitate the linen-draper, for after gazing long at the portrait, he could not refrain from shaking his fist at it, an involuntary and puerile action of which he instantly seemed ashamed. The second portrait, which seemed to make an equally vivid impression on him, represented a woman dressed in the monastic costume; this picture was dated A.D. 759, and bore the name of Merofleda, Abbess of Moriadek in Plouernel. The peculiarity of this portrait was that the abbess held in one hand an abbatical cross, and in the other a bloody sword, doubtless to indicate that this sword had not always remained in the scabbard. This woman was very beautiful, but her beauty was of a haughty, sinister and violent character; her features, worn by excesses and shrouded by long black and white vails, her large gray eyes flashing from under their bushy, red brows, her blood-red lips, with their at once cruel and sensual expression, and, lastly, the cross and bloody sword in the hands of an abbess, formed a strange and almost appalling whole. Lebrenn gazed at the picture with mingled disgust and abhorrence, and murmured in a low tone, "O Merofleda! noble abbess, consecrated by the devil, Messalina and Fredegonda were virgins compared with thee, the Marshal de Retz a lamb, and his infamous cloister a holy tabernacle by the side of thy cloister of demons!" He added with a deep sigh, as he raised his eyes to heaven as if in pity, "Poor Septimine la Coliberte! and thou, unhappy Broute Saule!"* And, sadly averting his gaze, he stood for a moment in thought. On raising his eyes, they rested on another portrait dated A.D. 1237, representing a warrior with shaven head and long, red beard, armed cap-a-pié, and wearing on his shoulder the red cloak and white cross of the Crusaders. "Ah! the Red Knight," exclaimed the linen-draper with a gesture of aversion, putting his hand before his eyes as if to shut out a frightful vision. His features soon relaxed, however; he breathed a sigh of relief, as if pleasant thoughts had succeeded his painful emotions, as he gazed with a kindly, almost affectionate air at a portrait dated A.D. 1463, and bearing the name of Gonthramn XII., Sieur de Plouernel. This picture represented a young man of thirty at most, dressed in a black velvet doublet, and wearing about his neck the golden collar of the Order of St. Michael. It would have been impossible to conceive of a gentler or more sympathetic countenance. The look and the half-smile that lurked on the lips of this personage wore an expression of touching melancholy. "Ah!" said Lebrenn, "the sight of this Plouernel rests, tranquillizes, and consoles me. Thank God! he is not the only one that has belied the proverbial wickedness of his race." Then, after a moment's silence, he

* As will be seen hereafter, the Franks soaked their hair with a mixture of grease and lime in order to render it of a bright red, the favorite color at that time.

* The story of the Abbess Merofleda, the Marshal de Retz, Septimine la Coliberte, Broute Saule, etc., etc., will be found in the sequel of the work.

added with a sigh, "Dear little Ghiselle de la Paonnière! thy life was short, but what a golden dream was this existence! And why could not thy sisters, Alison la Maçonne and Marotte la Haubergière have had—"* His reflections were interrupted by the entrance of M. de Plouernel.

CHAPTER VI.

THE linen-draper was so much absorbed in his reflections, that he started, as if just waking, when M. de Plouernel entered the room. Despite his self-command, Lebrenn could not help betraying some emotion on finding himself face to face with a descendant of this ancient family. We must premise that he had been informed by Jeanike of the frequent appearance of the colonel before his window; but, far from appearing anxious or angry, he assumed an air of good-natured embarrassment, which M. de Plouernel ascribed to the respectful deference which he must naturally inspire in a shop-keeper of the Rue St. Denis. Addressing himself to the tradesman, therefore, with an air of patronizing familiarity, the count motioned to a chair, and taking another himself, said, "Don't stand, my dear sir; sit down, I beg you."

"Ah! sir," answered Lebrenn, with an awkward bow, "you do me too much honor."

"Come, come, no ceremony, my dear sir," returned the count, adding, in a questioning tone, "My dear Mr.——Lebrenn, I believe."

"Lebrenn, at your service," replied the tradesman, bowing.

"Well, then, yesterday, I had the pleasure of seeing your excellent wife, Madame Lebrenn, and of speaking to her about a large purchase of linen which I wish to make for my regiment."

"We are very glad, sir, that you have honored our humble shop with your custom. I have come to learn how many yards of linen you need, and what quality you would like. Here are some samples," added he, feeling with a business-like air in the pocket of his coat. "If you will make a selection, I will tell you the price, the lowest price, the very lowest price, sir."

"It is unnecessary, my dear Lebrenn; I will tell you what I want in two words. I have four hundred and fifty dragoons, for whom I require a supply of four hundred and fifty shirts, of good quality; you will see to the making up, and whatever price you ask, I shall pay willingly; for I am convinced, my dear Lebrenn, that you are a thoroughly honest dealer."

"Ah! sir."

"The prince of linen-drapers."

"Sir! sir! you cover me with confusion; I do not deserve all this praise."

"You do not deserve it! Ah! my dear Lebrenn, you deserve much more, on the contrary."

"I will not contradict you. How soon do you want the linen?" asked the linen-draper, rising. "If you are in haste, the making will be a little dearer."

"First, do me the pleasure of sitting down again, my good man; don't go off in this way, like a flash. How do you know but what I have other orders to give you?"

"To obey you, I sit down again, sir. How soon do you want this linen?"

"By the end of March."

"Then, sir, four hundred and fifty shirts of the best quality will cost seven francs apiece."

"Upon my word! that is very cheap, my dear Lebrenn; and this is a compliment that buyers don't often pay to dealers, eh?"

"Not very often, it is true, sir. But you spoke of other orders—"

"The deuce! Sir, you lose no time; you think of nothing but your business."

"Eh! sir; it is a shopkeeper's trade to sell."

"And are you selling much just now?"

"Hem! so so, so so."

"What! only so so! That's bad, my dear Lebrenn; it must trouble you, for I suppose you are the father of a family?"

"You are very good, sir. I have a son."

"And are you bringing him up to take your place in the business?"

"Yes, sir, he is at the Central Commercial School."

"At his age—the fine fellow! And you have no other children?"

"Begging pardon for contradicting you, I have a daughter also."

"A daughter! my dear Lebrenn. If she resembles her mother, she must be charming."

"Ah! she is well grown and good-looking."

"You must be very proud of her. Come, confess it."

"Zounds! I don't deny it! I don't deny it!"

"Now I think of it," said the count, "I should like to give a surprise to good Madame Lebrenn."

"Sir, she is your humble servant."

"Do you know that I have an idea of shortly giving an entertainment in the great courtyard of my quarters, in which my dragoons will perform all sorts of

* The story of Ghiselle la Paonnière, Alison la Maçonne, and Marotte la Haubergière, will be found in the sequel of the work.

equestrian feats; now, you must promise me to come some Sunday with your excellent wife to see the rehearsal, and to partake, without ceremony, of a slight collation afterward."

"Ah! sir, you do us too much honor; I am covered with confusion."

"Come! you are jesting, my dear sir. Is it agreed?"

"May I bring my boy?"

"Certainly."

"And my daughter also?"

"How can you ask me such a question, my dear sir?"

"Really, sir, you would not think it strange if I brought my daughter?"

"By no means. By the way, an idea strikes me. You have heard of the ancient tournaments?"

"Tournaments?"

"Yes, in the days of chivalry."

"Excuse me, sir; humble folks like us know little of such things."

"Well, then, my dear Lebrenn, in the days of chivalry it was the custom to hold tournaments, in which several of my ancestors fought, whose portraits you see there."

"Oh!" said the tradesman, feigning surprise, and following the colonel's glance, "are those gentlemen your ancestors? I thought there was a family likeness."

"Do you see it?"

"Yes, sir, pardon the liberty."

"No excuses are needed. For heaven's sake! my dear sir, drop this formality. I was telling you that in these tournaments there was what was called the Queen of Beauty, who distributed the prizes among the victors. Well, your charming daughter shall be the Queen of Beauty in my tournament; she is in every respect worthy of it."

"Ah! sir, that would be too much honor. And then, don't you think, for a young girl to be exposed in this way to the gaze of your dragoons, would be a little—pardon the liberty—a little—what shall I say?"

"Away with these scruples, my dear Lebrenn. The noblest ladies were formerly queens of beauty in the tournament, and sometimes even gave a kiss to the conqueror."

"I understand—they were accustomed to it, while my daughter, you see—well, she is only eighteen, and has been brought up as a shop-keeper's daughter."

"Be easy, I never intended for an instant that your charming daughter should embrace the victor."

"Thank you; and if you would condescend to excuse my daughter from embracing—"

"Of course, my dear sir—what do you mean? I am too happy to see that you have accepted my invitation for yourself and your charming family."

"Ah! sir, the honor is all on our side."

"Not at all, it is on mine."

"Zounds! sir, you are too good. I see clearly the honor that you intend to do us."

"What do you mean, my dear fellow? I don't quite understand you. I found you so honest about your linen, that I said to myself directly, 'This Lebrenn must be an excellent man; I should be glad to give him a pleasure, and even to oblige him if I could.'"

"Ah! sir, I am confused by your goodness."

"By the way, you said just now that business was dull; let me pay for the linen in advance."

"Nay, nay, sir; it is not necessary."

"You are in want of money—speak frankly; the sum is a large one; I will give you a check on my banker."

"I assure you, sir, that I do not want the money in advance."

"Times are so hard, however."

"They are very hard, it is true, sir; we must hope for better ones."

"Ah! my dear Lebrenn," said the count, pointing to the pictures on the walls, "when those brave lords lived—those were the good old times!"

"Really, sir?"

"And who knows but they may return."

"Indeed; do you think so?"

"Some other day we will talk politics; for you talk politics, perhaps?"

"I could not take such a liberty, sir, a shop-keeper like me!"

"Ah! my dear fellow, you are a man of the good old times. You are right, indeed, in not talking politics; it is this foolish mania that is ruining everything. In the good old times of which I tell you, nobody reasoned; the king, the clergy, and the nobles commanded, and every one obeyed without saying a word."

"Zounds! that was very convenient."

"Yes, indeed."

"If I understand you rightly, the king, priests, and nobles said to the people, 'Do this!' and they did it?"

"Just so."

"'Pay this,' and they paid it?"

"Exactly."

"'Go there,' and they went?"

"Why, yes."

"In short, it was just like a drill—Right! left! march! halt! The people had not the trouble of wishing for themselves; the king, nobles, and clergy took this burden on themselves; and now, all this, alas! is changed."

"Happily, we must despair of nothing, my good Lebrenn."

"May God hear you!" said the tradesman, rising and bowing. "Your servant, sir."

"Well, then, on Sunday, I shall see you at the tournament with your family, my dear fellow; it is agreed?"

"Of course, sir, of course, my daughter will not miss the entertainment, since she is to be the Queen of—of—"

"Beauty, my dear fellow. It was not I that assigned her the part, but Nature."

"Ah! sir, what you say is so flattering to my daughter that, if you will permit me, I will tell her of it."

"Certainly, my dear sir, I not only permit but beg you to do so; still more, I will go without ceremony to invite good Madame Lebrenn and her daughter in person."

"Ah! sir, the poor women will be so much flattered with the honor you do them! I say nothing of myself, the cross of honor could not make me prouder."

"My dear Lebrenn, you are delightful."

"Your most obedient servant," said the linen-draper, retiring. Just as he reached the door, he appeared to think of something, and turned back, scratching his ear.

"Well, what is it, my dear Lebrenn?" said the count, surprised at his return.

"The matter is," said the tradesman, still scratching his ear, "that I have an idea—pardon the great liberty I take."

"Of course. Why should not you have ideas as well as any one else?"

"That's true, as Molière says—"

"What, do you read Molière?" asked the count with surprise. "To tell the truth, my dear sir, I just now remarked that you made use of old-fashioned language."

"I will tell you why, sir; when I saw that you talked to me in something the same way as Don Juan did to Dimanche, or Dorante to Jourdain—"

"What does this mean?" exclaimed M. de Plouernel, more and more surprised, and beginning to suspect that the linen-draper was not so simple as he seemed; "what does this mean?"

"Then," continued Lebrenn, with ironical good-nature, "in order to show my appreciation of the honor you did me, I assumed in turn the language of Dimanche and Jourdain—excuse the liberty. But, to return to my idea: it is my opinion, sir, according to my humble judgment, that you would not be sorry to have my daughter as a mistress."

"What!" cried the count, suddenly discomfited by this sudden address, "I do not know—I do not understand what you mean."

"Indeed! I am but a simpleton, and speak only according to my humble judgment."

"Your humble judgment! it serves you badly, sir, for, on my honor, you are mad: your idea is absurd."

"Is it, sir? well, so much the better; for I had said to myself, in my humble judgment, 'I am a petty shop-keeper of the Rue St. Denis, who sells linen; I have a pretty daughter; a young lord—for it appears that we are returning to the times of young lords—has seen my daughter and desires her; he gives me a large order, offers me his services in addition, and under this pretext—'"

"M. Lebrenn, I cannot permit jests to be made in my presence by a certain class of persons."

"Very proper; but just listen to my humble reasoning, if you please. 'This young lord,' I said to myself, 'proposes to give an entertainment in honor of my daughter's fine eyes, and to visit us frequently, for the sole purpose, while thus playing the part of the good prince, of effecting the ruin of my child.'"

"Sir!" cried the count, purple with vexation and anger, "by what right do you take the liberty of accusing me of such intentions?"

"Good! sir, that is speaking to the point. I am glad to know that you would not have been the one to invent such an unworthy and ridiculous project."

"Enough, sir, enough."

"Well, well, you would not have done it, that is understood, and I am quite at my ease; otherwise, you see, I should have been forced to say to you, humbly and reverently, as befits a poor man of my condition: 'Excuse the great liberty I take, sir; but, do you see, it is no longer the fashion to seduce the daughters of poor shop-keepers like us; for the last fifty years, this custom has been quite out of date—quite out of date. My lord duke and my lord marquis still contemptuously address the shop-keepers of the Rue St. Denis with insolent familiarity, as, "My dear Mr. What's Your Name?" or "My dear Mrs. What's Your Name?" looking down on the common people as an inferior race by the force of habit; but, zounds! it would not be at all prudent for them to go any farther. The shop-keepers of the Rue St. Denis are no longer afraid, as in olden times, of *lettres de cachet* and the Bastille; and if my lord duke or my lord marquis should take it into their heads to insult either them or their families, 'sdeath! these shop-keepers of the Rue St. Denis would not be long in giving my lord duke or my lord marquis a sound drubbing—pardon the liberty: I say a sound drubbing.'"

"By heavens! sir," "cried the colonel, pale with rage, and unable to restrain himself, "is this a threat?"

"No, sir," replied Lebrenn, throwing off his bantering air, and assuming a serious and resolute tone, "no, it is not a threat, but a lesson."

"A lesson!" shouted M. de Plouernel, "and to me!"

"Sir, in spite of your aristocratic prejudices, you are a man of honor; swear to me, on your honor, that, while trying to introduce yourself into my house, and offering me your services, you had no designs on my daughter, and I will take back what I have said."

M. de Plouernel, greatly embarrassed by the alternative offered him, blushed, cast down his eyes before the penetrating gaze of the shop-keeper, and stood mute.

"Ah!" resumed Lebrenn, bitterly, "they are incorrigible; they have forgotten nothing and learned nothing; in their eyes we are still the vanquished, the conquered, the subject race."

"Sir!"

"Ah! I know it full well; but we no longer live in the days when, after violating my child, you could have scourged me and hung me up at the gate of your castle, as the lord whom you see there did to one of my ancestors." And Lebrenn pointed to one of the portraits, to the great surprise of M. de Plouernel. "It appeared to you a very natural thing, however," added the shop-keeper, "to take my daughter as a mistress. I am no longer either your slave, your serf, your vassal, or your subject; yet, playing the part of a good prince, you do me the favor to bid me be seated, and address me disdainfully as 'My dear Lebrenn.' Counts are no longer recognized, yet you continue to bear your title and arms. Civil equality is proclaimed, yet nothing would seem more horrible to you than to marry your daughter or sister to a shop-keeper or mechanic, whatever might be his merit or morality. Can you deny the truth of this? No; and should you cite an exception, it would be a new proof that it is possible in your eyes for a person to marry beneath him. These things are trifles, you will say—granted; but is it not a grave symptom that such importance is attached through tradition to these trifles? Let you and yours arrive at power to-morrow, and by force of necessity, as under the Restoration, you would gradually re-establish all your ancient privileges, which, from being puerile, would then become odious, shameful, and ruinous to us all, as they were to our fathers for so many ages."

M. de Plouernel had been so astounded by the change in the shop-keeper's manner and language that he had listened in silence; he now resumed, with haughty irony, "And doubtless, sir, the moral of the fine lesson in history which you have been kind enough to give me, in your capacity of linen-draper, is to hang the priests and nobles to the lamp-post, as in the days of '89, and to marry our daughters to the first ragamuffin that comes along."

"Ah! sir," resumed Lebrenn, in a tone full of dignity, "let us not talk of reprisals; forget what your fathers suffered during those terrible years, and I will forget, on my part, what my fathers suffered from yours, not for a few years, but for fifteen centuries of torture. Marry your daughters and sisters to whom you please; you have a right to do so; believe that a person can marry beneath him; it is your own business. I simply quote these facts as symptoms, and these symptoms, I repeat, are grave, for they prove that, in your eyes, there are, and there will always be, two races."

"And even if this be true, how does it concern you?"

"It concerns us greatly, sir. The Holy Alliance, the assertion of divine and absolute right, and the omnipotence of the priesthood and the aristocracy by birth, such are the inevitable results of the belief that there are two races—one superior, and the other inferior, one made to command, and the other to obey and suffer."

M. de Plouernel remembered the conversation which he had just had with his uncle, the cardinal, and could make no reply.

"You ask me the moral of this lesson in history," resumed the shop-keeper. 'It is this: As I am extremely jealous of the liberties won for us by our fathers, at the price of their blood and martyrdom, and as I wish no longer to be treated like a conquered person, as long as your party remains within the limits of the laws, I vote against it in my capacity of voter; but when, as in 1830, it oversteps these limits, for the purpose of carrying out its fixed idea by reviving the rule of priestcraft and despotism, that is to say, the form of government that existed before '89, I join the rioters, and, excuse the liberty, fire with a good will upon your party."

"Which returns it!"

"With a good aim; for I had my arm broken in 1830 by a Swiss bullet. But why should there always be battle, always bloodshed—and brave blood on both sides? Why must you always dream of a past that can never return? You have conquered, despoiled, ruled, speculated upon and tortured us for fifteen centuries; is not that enough? Do we wish in turn to oppress you? No, a thousand times no! The conquest of liberty has cost us too dear, and we know its value too well, to seek to infringe on that of others. But how can it be otherwise? Since '89 your alliances with foreign nations, your efforts to stir up civil war, your continual counter-revolutionary schemes, and your intimate alliance with the clerical party—all this disturbs and grieves men of thought, and irritates and exasperates men of action. Once more, what is the use of this? Does humanity ever go

backward? No, never. You may indeed do harm, and great harm; but your divine rights and privileges are gone, never more to return; make up your mind to it; in this way you will spare your country and yourself, perhaps, many disasters; for I tell you, the future is republican."

Lebrenn's tone and manner were so earnest, that M. de Plouernel was not convinced, but affected by his words; his indomitable pride of race struggled with his desire to acknowledge to the shop-keeper that he found him at least a generous adversary. At that moment, the door suddenly opened, and an adjutant of his regiment entered, who said hastily, with a military salute, "Excuse me, colonel, for entering without knocking, but orders have just been received to mount instantly and remain under arms in the courtyard; disturbances are expected this evening."

Lebrenn was preparing to leave the room, when M. de Plouernel said to him; "Well, sir, as matters look now, after your republican opinions, I may have the honor of meeting you to-morrow at the barricade."

"I know not what may happen," returned the shop-keeper, "but I neither fear nor desire such a meeting." He added with a smile, "I think, sir, we had better postpone the order you gave me."

"I think so, too," said the colonel, with a constrained bow to Lebrenn, who quitted the room.

CHAPTER VII.

During the preceding conversation between the linen-draper and M. de Plouernel, the wife and daughter of the former had been sitting as usual behind the shop-counter. While her daughter embroidered, Madame Lebrenn employed herself in examining the accounts. She was a woman of forty, of tall stature; her face, at once grave and sweet, preserved the traces of remarkable beauty; and there was a calmness and decision in the tones of her voice, her attitude, and her expression which gave a high idea of her character. The sight of her recalled to the memory the part taken by our mothers in the Councils of State on great occasions, and the courage of these matrons, which was so great as to cause Diodorus Siculus to say of them, "The women of Gaul not only rival the men in loftiness of stature, but equal them in strength of soul."

Mademoiselle Velleda Lebrenn was seated by the side of her mother. At the first sight of this young girl, it was impossible not to be struck with her rare beauty, of an expression at once proud, ingenuous and thoughtful. Nothing could have been clearer than her azure eyes, more dazzling than her complexion, or nobler than the bearing of her charming head, crowned with long golden brown tresses. Tall, slender, finely proportioned, and robust without being masculine, the character of her beauty accounted for the paternal caprice of the shop-keeper in giving his child the name of Velleda, once borne by an heroic woman, illustrious in the patriotic annals of Gaul. It would have been easy to fancy Velleda Lebrenn, her brow crowned with oak-leaves, clad in a long white robe, confined by a brass belt, striking the golden harp of the Druids, those admirable teachers of our fathers, who elevated them by the thought of the immortality of the soul, and taught them to die with such grandeur and serenity. In Velleda Lebrenn might likewise have been discovered the proud type of those sinewy and snowy-armed Gallic women, clad in black, quoted by Ammianus Marcellinus,* who followed their husbands to battle in their chariots of war, with their children, encouraging the combatants by voice and gesture, joining them in case of defeat, and preferring death to slavery or shame. Those who did not evoke these tragic and glorious memories of the past, saw in Velleda Lebrenn a beautiful young girl of eighteen, with magnificent brown tresses, whose ravishing form was displayed to advantage by a pretty dress of delicate blue poplin, set off by a little cravat of orange-colored satin, knotted beneath a snowy collar.

While Madame Lebrenn examined her accounts, and her daughter continued her embroidery, chatting with her mother, Gildas Pakou, the shop-boy, stood on the threshold of the door, so anxious and restless that he forgot to quote snatches of his beloved Breton ballads. The honest lad's mind was occupied with one absorbing thought, namely, the strange contrast which he found between the reality and the promises of his mother, who had pictured the Rue St. Denis in general, and Lebrenn's house in particular, as the very essence of peace and tranquillity. Suddenly, he turned to Madame Lebrenn, and exclaimed in terror, "Madam! madam! do you hear?"

"What, Gildas?" asked his mistress, calmly, continuing to write.

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* "The Gallic woman equals her husband in strength; when she is roused to anger, her eyes flash fire, and her snowy arms, brandished in air, deal blows as swift and strong as the bolts from a catapult."—Ammianus Marcellinus.

"I am not ignorant of the fact that the Gauls intrusted their most important secrets to the women, and that they often submitted the affairs which they could not settle among themselves to the decision of their wives and daughters."—The Martyrs.

"If a Carthaginian esteems himself injured by a Gaul, the case is submitted to the Supreme Council of the Gallic women."—Plutarch.

"The drum! and see, there are men running!"

"Well, Gildas, let them run," said Madame Lebrenn.

"It is the call to arms," said Velleda, after listening a moment. "It is probably feared that the agitation which has prevailed in Paris since last night is increasing."

"Jeanike," said Madame Lebrenn, "you must get your master's uniform ready; he may want it when he comes in."

"I will go for it directly."

"Gildas," resumed Madame Lebrenn, "can you see the Porte St. Denis from here?"

"Yes," replied Gildas, trembling; "must I go there?"

"No, be easy, only tell us whether many people are collected together."

"Yes, they are swarming like bees. O dear! madam, O dear!"

"What now, Gildas?"

"Oh! there are the drummers; they are turning the corner, O dear!"

"Well!"

"Some men in blouses have just stopped them and burst their drums. Look! everybody is running this way. Hear how they shout! Shall we close the shop?"

"Really, Gildas, you are not much of a hero," said Velleda, smiling, without ceasing her embroidery.

At that moment a man in a blouse, who was laboriously dragging a hand-cart, apparently heavily laden, stopped before the shop, drew the cart on the sidewalk, entered the shop, and asked,

"Does M. Lebrenn live here?"

"Yes."

"Here are four bales of goods for him."

"Linen, I suppose?" asked Madame Lebrenn.

"I—I suppose so," answered the porter, smiling.

"Gildas," said Madame Lebrenn to the lad, who was staring with increasing terror, "help this man to carry the goods into the back shop."

The porter and Gildas unloaded the bales, which were in large thick rolls, covered with coarse brown linen.

"This linen must be most confoundedly close packed," exclaimed Gildas, as with difficulty he aided the porter to carry the last; "it is as heavy as lead."

"Indeed; do you think so, my good fellow?" rejoined the porter, fixing his gaze on Gildas. Then turning to Madame Lebrenn, "My commission is done," said he, "but I advise you not to put these bales in a damp place or near the fire until M. Lebrenn's arrival; these linens are very—very delicate." As he said this, he wiped his forehead, which was wet with perspiration.

"You must have found it very difficult to bring these goods all alone," said Madame Lebrenn kindly, and opening the money-drawer, she took from it a ten-sous piece, which she laid on the counter. "Here, take this for your trouble."

"A thousand thanks, madam; I am already paid," replied the porter, smiling.

"What a wonderful house is this, where porters return thanks and refuse money for drink!" thought Gildas.

Madame Lebrenn, surprised at the manner in which the porter had declined her offer, raised her eyes and saw a man of about thirty, with a pleasing countenance and, what is rare among porters, remarkably white and clean hands, with a fine gold signet-ring on the little finger.

"Can you tell me, sir," asked she, "whether the disturbance has increased much to-day in Paris?"

"Greatly, Madam; it is almost impossible to make one's way through the streets. Troops are coming from all sides; the artillery is posted with lighted fusees close by here, opposite the Gymnasium. I met two squadrons of dragoons patrolling with their muskets in their hands. The drums are everywhere beat to arms; though the National Guard shows very little alacrity. But, excuse me, madam," said the porter, bowing politely to, madam Lebrenn and her daughter, "it is almost four o'clock, and I am in haste." He left the shop, and hurriedly wheeled away his cart.

On hearing of the artillery stationed in the neighborhood with lighted fusees, Gildas's astonishment became unbounded; nevertheless, divided between hope and fear, he ventured to glance again into that terrible Rue St. Denis, in such close proximity to the cannon. At the moment that Gildas stretched his neck out of the shop, the young girl who had breakfasted with M. de Plouernel and improvised such mad-cap songs, came out of the alley leading to the house where George Duchêne lived, just opposite the linen-draper's shop. Pradeline looked anxious and uneasy. She walked onward a few steps, then drew as near as possible to Lebrenn's abode, and tried to look in, but was prevented by the thick window-curtains. The door, it is true, was open, but Gildas, who stood in it, blocked it up completely. Pradeline, however, not thinking that she was observed, tried her best to look into the shop. Gildas had been watching the young girl's maneuvers for some time with increasing surprise; mistaking their meaning, he believed himself the object of the persistent gaze of Pradeline. The bashful lad cast down his eyes and blushed to the ears; his frightened modesty bid him go into the shop, to prove to the bold girl the little value that he set on her allurements, but his self-love kept him standing in the doorway, saying to himself more than ever,

"What a wonderful city this is, where the young girls come close to loaded cannon, to stare at lads." Then seeing Pradeline cross the street and enter a neighboring coffee-house, "The unhappy girl!" he cried, "she has probably gone to drown her cares in brandy. Who knows but she will come back and pursue me into the shop? What would Madame Lebrenn and Mademoiselle say?"

A new incident cut short for the moment the modest fears of Gildas. A four-wheeled truck, drawn by a powerful horse, and containing three large, flat cases, about six feet in height, marked "Handle carefully," stopped before the door. The truck was driven by two men; one, that Dupont, who had called early in the morning to prevent Lebrenn from going to his pepper stores; the other wearing a bushy, gray beard. They alighted, and Dupont, entering the shop, bowed to Madame Lebrenn, saying, "Is M. Lebrenn at home?"

"No, sir."

"Here are three cases of looking-glasses for him."

"Very well," replied Madame Lebrenn, and calling Gildas, she ordered him to assist in carrying them into the back shop.

"A wonderful house!" murmured the shop-boy, obeying. "Three cases of looking-glasses, and so heavy! My master and his wife and daughter must be very fond of looking at themselves."

Dupont and his gray-bearded companion had just aided Gildas in carrying the cases to the back shop, when Madame Lebrenn asked, "Is there anything new, sir? Is the excitement quieted in Paris?"

"On the contrary, madam, it grows warmer and warmer," answered Dupont, with an ill-disguised air of satisfaction. "They are beginning to erect barricades in the Faubourg St. Antoine. To-night, the preparations; to-morrow, the battle." Scarcely had he uttered these words when a great tumult and loud shouts of "Reform forever!" were heard at a distance. Gildas ran to the door.

"Let us make haste," said Dupont to his companion, "or our truck will be taken to build a barricade. It would be too soon, we have more customers to serve." Then, bowing to Madame Lebrenn, "My compliments to your husband," he said.

The two men sprang to their seat, whipped their horse, and disappeared in an opposite direction from the crowd. Gildas had followed this new movement of the mob with increasing anxiety. He suddenly saw Pradeline quit the coffee-house and come toward the shop with a letter in her hand. "What madness! She has been writing to me," thought Gildas. "The unfortunate girl is bringing me a letter, a declaration of love. I shall be disgraced in the sight of my employers!" In his terror, the affrighted lad shut the door, turned the key, and slunk into a corner.

"What is the matter?" asked Madame Lebrenn; "why do you shut the door?"

"It is more prudent, madam; I just saw a band of frightful-looking men coming this way."

"You have lost your reason, Gildas. Open the door."

"But, madam—"

"Do as I tell you. There, some one is trying to get in. Open the door."

"It is that huzzy with her letter," thought Gildas, more dead than alive. "Ah! why did I ever quit my quiet little town of Auray!" He opened the door with a beating heart, but instead of seeing the young girl with her letter, he found himself face to face with the linen-draper and his son.

CHAPTER VIII.

Madame Lebrenn was surprised and delighted at the sight of her son, whom she thought still at school. Velleda tenderly embraced her brother, while the shop-keeper pressed the hand of his wife.

Sacrovir Lebrenn, from his resolute air, seemed worthy to bear the glorious name that formerly belonged to one of the greatest Gallic patriots of whom history makes mention. The son of the linen-draper was a tall and robust lad of over nineteen, with an open, kindly, and fearless countenance; a light down shaded his lip and chin, and his cheeks were flushed with emotion; he strongly resembled his father. Madame Lebrenn embraced her son, saying, "I little expected the pleasure of seeing you to-day, my child."

"I went to his school for him," said her husband. "You shall know why, directly, my dear Henory."

"Without being alarmed," returned Madame Lebrenn, "Velleda and I have been surprised at not seeing you before. It appears that the excitement is increasing in Paris. The drums have beat to arms."

"O mother!" cried Sacrovir, his eyes sparkling with enthusiasm, "Paris is in a fever. All hearts are beating high. Strangers meet in the streets like old acquaintances, and understand each other at the first glance; burning words and summons to arms are heard in every street; the air smells of powder, in short! O mother, mother!" added the young man, excitedly, "how beautiful is the uprising of a people!"

"Come, calm yourself, enthusiast," said Madame Lebrenn, smiling, as she wiped

the perspiration from her son's forehead with her handkerchief, while Lebrenn embraced his daughter.

"Gildas," said the shop-keeper, "have any cases been brought here in my absence?"

"Yes, sir; linen and looking-glasses; they are in the back shop."

"Very well, let them alone, and, above all, take care not to carry the light near the linen."

"It seems as inflammable as gun-cotton; it must be muslin or gauze," thought Gildas, "yet it is as heavy as lead; another wonderful circumstance!"

"My dear," said Lebrenn to his wife, "I have something to say to you; let us go to your room while Jeanike sets the table, for it is late. Gildas, you may put up the shutters; we shall not be likely to have many customers to-night."

"Close the shop! Oh! sir, you are right," cried Gildas, with delight. "I have long been thinking that it was time!"

"Wait a moment, Gildas," said his master; "you must not close the door, for several persons are coming here to see me. You can take them into the back shop and let me know when they come."

"Yes, sir," replied Gildas, with a sigh, for he would have much rather seen the shop wholly closed, and the door secured by its stout iron bars.

"Now, my dear," said Lebrenn to his wife, "we will go to your room."

Night had already set in. The family of the linen-draper repaired to the second story, and assembled in the sleeping-apartment of Madame Lebrenn. "My dear Henory," said Lebrenn, "we are on the eve of great events."

"I am of your opinion," replied his wife, pensively.

"I will tell you, briefly, how affairs stand," continued Lebrenn. "You ought to know this in order to judge of the course I have determined to take; to oppose it if it seems to you unjust and wrong, or to encourage it if it seems to you good."

"I am listening, my dear," replied his wife, as calm, serious and thoughtful as our mothers in those solemn councils where their advice often prevailed.

"Yesterday," resumed Lebrenn, "Barrot and his comrades, after endeavoring for three months to stir up France, summoned the people to assemble in the streets; but these bold agitators did not venture to appear there themselves. The people met by themselves, to assert their right of assembling, and to transact their own affairs. This evening it is said that the king has taken Barrot and his comrades into the ministry. Now we do not rise to make this foolish man, the puppet of Thiers, minister; what we wish, what the people wish, is the overthrow of the throne, the establishment of a republic, sovereignty for all, and political rights for all, in order to secure to all education, comfort, work, and credit, as the reward of courage and integrity. This is what we wish, my wife; is it just or unjust?"

"It is just," replied Madame Lebrenn, in a firm and decided tone, "it is just."

"I have told you what we wish," continued Lebrenn, "I will tell you what we will no longer suffer. We will no longer suffer two hundred thousand privileged voters alone to decide the fate of thirty-four millions of the common people, in the same manner that an imperceptible conquering minority, whether Roman or Frankish, despoiled, subjugated, and worked our fathers for twenty centuries. No, we will no longer suffer electoral or industrial feudalism any more than martial feudalism. Wife, is this just or unjust?"

"It is just; for serfhood and slavery have been perpetuated to our days," returned Madame Lebrenn, with emotion. "It is just; for I am a woman, and I have seen women, the slaves of insufficient wages, die by inches, worn out with excessive labor and want. It is just; for I am a mother, and I have seen daughters, the slaves of manufacturers, forced to choose between dishonor and loss of work—that is, of bread. It is just; for I am a wife, and I have seen fathers of families, upright, industrious, and intelligent tradesmen, the slaves and victims of the caprice or usurious cupidity of their masters, the large capitalists, condemned to bankruptcy, ruin, and despair. Lastly, your resolution is just and good, my dear," added Madame Lebrenn, extending her hand to her husband, "because, happy as you have hitherto been in escaping many evils, it is your duty to devote yourself to the enfranchisement of your brethren, who are suffering from calamities from which we are exempt."

"Brave and generous woman! you redouble my strength and courage," cried Lebrenn, warmly pressing his wife's hand; "I expected nothing less of you. Now, a last word. These just rights which we demand for our brethren, must be conquered, as usual, by force—by arms."

"I believe you, my dear."

"Therefore," resumed the shop-keeper, "to-night, the barricades; to-morrow, at day-break, the battle. It was for this reason that I brought our son away from school. Do you approve of it? do you wish him to remain?"

"Yes; your son's place is by your side."

"Oh! thanks, thanks, mother!" cried the young man, throwing himself into the arms of his mother, who clasped him to her breast.

"Look at him, father!" said Velleda,

half smiling, "he is as happy as though it were a holiday."

"But tell me, my dear," resumed Madame Lebrenn, addressing her husband, "where will you and Sacrovir fight? Will the barricade be near here — in this street?"

"At our door," replied Lebrenn. "It is agreed upon—my friends spoil me."

"Oh! so much the better," exclaimed his wife, "we shall be close by you."

"Mother," said Velleda, "ought we not to prepare lint and bandages to-night? There will be many wounded."

"I was thinking of it, my child. Our shop will answer for a hospital."

"O my mother! my sister!" cried the young man, "we shall fight for liberty under your eyes. How it will inspire us! Alas!" he added, after a moment's reflection, "why must brothers shed each other's blood?"

"It is sad that it must be so," replied his father, with a sigh. "Ah! the blood shed in this fratricidal conflict be on the heads of those who force a nation to claim its rights by arms, as we shall do to-morrow, as our fathers did in almost every century of our history, and sometimes even two or three times in a century—heroes as they were! Bless their forgotten names, therefore, my children. The blood of these unknown heroes and martyrs has fructified the germ of all our liberties, since there has never been a social, political, or religious reform that has not been won by these terrible popular insurrections in which so many have perished!"

"Thank God!—in our days, at least, we fight without hatred," said the young man. "The soldiers fight in the name of discipline, the people in the name of their rights—a fatal, but honorable, duel, which, once over, the surviving adversaries shake hands."

"But, as all are not survivors, and as I or my son may remain at a barricade," resumed Lebrenn, smiling, "a last word, my children. You see that where others turn pale with fear, we smile serenely; and wherefore? Because to us there is no such thing as death; because, reared in the faith of our fathers, instead of seeing, in what is termed the end of life, something lugubrious and terrible, which plunges us into eternal darkness, we see naught in death but the door through which we pass to meet or to wait a shorter or longer time for those we love, and to rejoin them on the other side of the curtain, which, during the first part of our life here on earth, hides from us the marvelous and dazzling mysteries of our future stages of existence—stages as infinite and varied as the divine power from which they emanate. In a word, we do not cease to live, but go to live elsewhere in unknown countries, that is all."*

"Such is so far my idea of death," cried Sacrovir, "that I am sure of dying with a feeling of incredible curiosity. What strange and dazzling new worlds shall I visit!"

"My brother is right," said Velleda, with equal curiosity; "it must be so beautiful, new, and marvelous! And how delightful to think that we shall be separated but for a moment throughout eternity! Oh! at the thought, my dear mother, how impatient the mind is to see and to know!"

"Come, come, you curious girl, don't be so impatient," rejoined her mother, laughing, but with a tone of affectionate reproach. "Don't you remember how I used to scold you, when a child, in your drawing lessons, for thinking less of the model that you were copying than of the next one that you were to have? I beg of you, my dear child, not to let your natural curiosity to know what is on the other side of the curtain distract your attention from the things on this side."

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* We have supposed—a thing less strange than it appears at first sight, since the Jewish religion, which is not less ancient than Druidism, still has its believers—Lebrenn and his family to have remained faithful, through tradition, to the doctrine of the eternity of the physical existence, so admirably expounded by the Druids of Gaul. In the subsequent part of this work we shall see the prodigies wrought by this faith in the continuity and perpetuity of our existence, many centuries before the appearance of Christianity. We will merely quote here an extract from the magnificent work on Druidism by our illustrious friend Reynaud:

"Such was the essential characteristic of the doctrine of the Druids, and therefore was it that those who believed in it were delivered, as far as possible, from the fear of death. On being separated from the organs which he had used during his earthly existence, man did not become a shade—as in Paganism and the doctrines of the Church of Rome—but the soul immediately took possession of a new body, and this without entering the fabulous empire of Pluto, or that of Satan, any more than the mystical clouds of the empyrean; it simply went to take up its abode on another planet. Death, therefore, formed, in reality, but a dividing line between a periodical series of existence. This is evident from the verses of Lucan: 'According to you,' he says, addressing the Druids, 'the shades do not repair to the silent domains of Erebus and the pale kingdom of Pluto; the same spirit rules in another world, composed of other members. If your hymns be true, death is only a halt in a long life.'

"Lucan was right in adding that the Gauls were happy in the possession of such a faith. There is no reason for astonishment, therefore, that the doctrine of immortality should have formed the chief feature of their religion; it was the most elevated, and consequently the most fruitful; and for this reason, nothing was more natural than that it should have been presented to the people as the most precious of teachings. The historians agree in affirming the partiality of the Druids for this doctrine, which is, indeed, that most characteristic of the genius of Gaul. Pompilius Mela says, that it was the only doctrine that was popular. Cæsar, who regards it from a military point of view—that is, in its influence on war—likewise asserts that there was nothing to which the Druids attached greater importance. 'In the first place,' says Cæsar, 'the Druids seek to persuade men that the soul does not perish, but passes after death from one body to another, and they think that this acts as a powerful incentive to courage, by making men disregard the fear of death.' 'What do you fear?' a Gaul was once asked. 'I fear nothing but the falling of the skies,' was the answer."

"Oh! be easy, mother," replied the young girl, warmly. "As long as you and father, and Sacrovir are on this side of the vail, I shall have enough to occupy my thoughts without becoming abstracted."

"See how the time has passed while we have been philosophizing," said Lebrenn, laughing. "Jeanike has come to call us to dinner, and I have told you nothing as yet that I meant to say. In case my curiosity should be satisfied before yours, my dear Henory," he added, addressing his wife and pointing to a desk, "you will find my last wishes there. You know them already, for we have but one mind. This," said he, taking an unsealed envelope from his pocket, "concerns our dear daughter; you will give it to her after reading it." Velleda colored at the thought that it probably related to her marriage.

"As to you, my child," said the shopkeeper, addressing his son, "take this key," and he detached it from his watch-chain. "It is the key of the room the shutters of which are kept closed, and which no one but myself and your mother has yet entered. Next year, on the eleventh of September, you will have attained your one-and-twentieth year; on that day, and not before, you can open the door. Among other things, you will find in this room a document which you are to read, and which will inform you that by virtue of an immemorial family tradition—for we plebeians, we the vanquished, also have our archives, archives often as glorious, believe me, as those of our conquerors—you will learn, I say, that by virtue of a family tradition, the eldest son, or in default of such, the eldest daughter, or our nearest relative, is made acquainted with these archives, and the various relics adjoined thereto. Now, my beloved ones," added Lebrenn, in a voice trembling with emotion, rising and opening his arms to his wife and children, "a last embrace. Before to-morrow we may be separated for a time, and the possibility of a separation is always saddening."

The picture was an affecting one. Madame Lebrenn clung to the neck of her husband, who threw one arm round his daughter and the other round his son, and clasped them passionately to his breast. The touching group remained for some moments silent, and naught was heard but the tender kisses exchanged; then, this debt of nature paid, despite a stoicism derived from their faith in eternal life, they relaxed their loving embrace, and raised their heads with a calm but sad expression; the mother and daughter grave and thoughtful, the father and son tranquil and resolute.

"And now," said Lebrenn, "to work, my dear children. You, wife, will busy yourself with Velleda and Jeanike in making bandages and scraping lint, while I and Sacrovir will employ ourselves, till the moment for the simultaneous erection of the barricades all over Paris, in unpacking the cartridges and arms, with which several of my comrades are to supply themselves here."

"But where are these arms, my dear?" asked Madame Lebrenn.

"In those bales and cases just brought here," answered the shop-keeper, with a smile.

"Oh! now I understand. But it will be necessary to take Gildas into your confidence. The lad can doubtless be trusted; nevertheless, are you not afraid—"

"At this moment, my dear Henory, the mask is thrown off; it is too late to fear indiscretion. If poor Gildas is afraid, I will offer him a safe retreat in the cellar or the loft. Now for dinner; then you can return here with Velleda and Jeanike to prepare stores for your hospital, while Sacrovir and I will stay in the shop, for we shall have numerous visitors to-night."

The family descended to the back shop, where they dined in haste. The excitement continued to increase in the street; the dull, threatening noise of the mob was heard in the distance, like the distant roar of the tempest on the waves. A few windows were illuminated in honor of the change in the ministry; but some friends of Lebrenn, who came in and out, bringing him fresh tidings, asserted that these concessions of royalty only testified its weakness, that the night would be a decisive one, and that the people were everywhere arming themselves and asking for muskets at the different houses, after which they chalked on the door, "Arms furnished."

Dinner over, Madame Lebrenn returned with her daughter and Jeanike to her room, which looked out on the street, while the linen-draper, his son, and Gildas remained in the back shop. The latter was endowed by nature with a healthy appetite; nevertheless, he ate nothing, his uneasiness increased every moment, and he said oftener than ever to Jeanike, "What a wonderful house! what wonderful streets! what a wonderful city!"

"Gildas," said Lebrenn, "bring me a hammer and chisel; I and my son will open these cases, while you open those bales."

"Those bales of linen, sir?"

"Yes. In the first place, rip up the covering with a knife."

The linen-draper, together with Sacrovir, furnished with hammers and chisels, began to deal the cases vigorous blows, while Gildas, laying one of the bales on the floor, knelt down and prepared to open it. "O, sir," cried he suddenly, frightened by the violent blows which his master gave the case with the hammer, "Oh sir, take care;

look, the cases are marked 'Handle carefully;' you will break the looking-glasses to atoms!"

"Be easy, Gildas," answered his master, hammering with all his might, "these looking-glasses are very solid."

"They are plated over with lead and iron," said Sacrovir, redoubling his blows.

"More and more wonderful!" murmured Gildas, kneeling before the bale, in order to cut it open. To see the better, he took a candle and placed it on the floor beside him. He was beginning to rip the coarse brown linen covering, when Lebrenn, suddenly spying the illumination contrived by his shopman, shouted, "What, Gildas, are you mad? Put the light on the table. The devil! do you want to blow us up, my lad?"

"Blow us up, sir!" cried Gildas in terror, springing back from the bale, while Sacrovir replaced the light on the table; "why should I blow us up?"

"Because these bales are full of cartridges, my lad; so take care."

"Cartridges!" cried Gildas, drawing back, more and more frightened, while the linen-draper took a couple of muskets from the case that he had just opened, and his son drew forth several carabines and pairs of pistols. At the sight of these arms, and feeling himself surrounded with cartridges, Gildas's head turned, he grew fearfully pale, and, leaning against a table for support, cried, "What a wonderful house, where the bales of linen are cartridges and the looking-glasses guns and pistols!"

"My good Gildas," said his master, kindly, "there is no danger in unpacking these arms and ammunition. This is all I expect of you. As soon as it is done, you can go to the cellar or the loft, if you like, and remain there in safety till the battle is over; for I must warn you, Gildas, that there will be a battle at day-break. Only, once in your retreat, don't put your nose outside when you hear the firing, for bullets often miscarry."

This talk of stray bullets, battle, and firing plunged Gildas into a sort of giddiness, easy to be imagined; he had not expected to find the Rue St. Denis so warlike. His terror was soon redoubled. Fresh noises, at first distant, came nearer, and finally burst forth with such fury that Gildas, Lebrenn, and his son rushed to the shop-door to see what was going on in the street.

CHAPTER IX.

When Lebrenn, his son, and Gildas rushed to the door, attracted by the increasing noise and tumult, the street was already crowded with the rioters, while the open windows were filled with curious spectators. Suddenly, flickering gleams of reddish light illuminated the fronts of the houses. These sinister flashes were accompanied and preceded by a vast, surging mass, which increased continually. The clamor became more and more terrible. At intervals cries of "To arms! Vengeance!" rose above the tumult. These cries were answered by exclamations of horror. The women who had been drawn to the casements by the noise fell back terrified, as if to escape some frightful vision. The linen-draper and his son, with throbbing hearts and moist brows, remained on the threshold, with a foreboding of some horrible spectacle.

The funeral train at length appeared in sight. An innumerable multitude of men, variously arrayed in blouses, in citizen's dress, and in the uniform of the National Guard, and brandishing guns, swords, knives and clubs, preceded a diligence-truck, drawn slowly by one horse, and surrounded by men, carrying torches. The cart was heaped with dead bodies. A man of prodigious stature, with a red cap on his head and naked to the waist, stood upright in front of the vehicle, waving a lighted torch. He might have been taken for the genius of vengeance and insurrection. At every movement, the red flame of his torch lighted up, here the gray hairs of old men stained with blood, there the bust of a woman, whose nerveless arms and livid and bleeding head, half hidden by long, loose hair, dangled from the cart. At intervals, the man in the red cap waved his torch and cried in a voice of thunder, "They are massacring our brothers! Vengeance! To the barricades! To arms!" Thousands of voices, trembling with anger and indignation, repeated the cry, "Vengeance! To the barricades! To arms!" while thousands of hands, both armed and unarmed, were raised toward the dark and stormy sky, as if to call it to witness these avenging oaths.

The exasperated crowd which swelled the funeral train continued to increase. It passed like a bloody vision before the linen-draper and his son. Their first emotion was so painful that they were unable to utter a word. Their eyes filled with tears on learning that these inoffensive and unarmed people had just been massacred on the Boulevard des Capucines. Scarcely had the cart disappeared with the dead bodies when Lebrenn seized one of the iron bars used to close his shop, and, brandishing it above his head, exclaimed to the indignant crowd, "Friends! royalty has begun the battle by slaughtering our brethren; their blood be on its accursed head. May this blood smother it forever! No more kings! No more butchers of the people! To the barricades!

To arms! The republic forever!" And the linen-draper and his son tore up the first paving-stones.

The words and example were electric, and thousands of voices reëchoed the cry, "To arms! To the barricades! Down with the kings! Down with the butchers of the people! Long live the republic!" In an instant, the neighboring houses were everywhere invaded by men demanding weapons and bars with which to tear up the pavement. The first opening made, those who had neither iron bars nor sticks began to tear up the stones with their hands.

Lebrenn and his son were vigorously laboring to erect a barricade a few paces from their door, when they were joined by George Duchêne, the joiner, accompanied by twenty armed men, forming half a section of the secret society to which both he and Lebrenn belonged. Among these new combatants were the two porters who had brought the arms and ammunition to the shop during the day; one an eminent literary man, and the other a scholar, together with Dupont, the engineer. George Duchêne approached Lebrenn just as the latter, ceasing for an instant to work at the barricade, was distributing arms and ammunition from the door of his shop to the men of the neighborhood on whom he could rely; while Gildas, whose poltroonery had been transformed into heroism ever since the sinister appearance of the cart filled with dead bodies, returned from the cellar with several basketsful of wine, which he poured out for the workmen on the barricade to refresh them. George, dressed in a blouse, carried a carabine in his hand and a supply of cartridges in a handkerchief tied about his waist.

"It was impossible for me to come any sooner, M. Lebrenn," said he to the linen-draper, "on account of having to pass so many barricades. I have just left Caussidière and Sobrier, who are preparing to march on the Prefecture; Leserré, Lagrange and Étienne Arago are to march on the Tuileries and barricade the Rue Richelieu at daybreak; and our other friends are divided among several districts."

"And what of the troops, George?"

"Several of the regiments are fraternizing with the National Guard, and the people are shouting, 'Hurrah for Reform, down with Louis Philippe!' But the Municipal Guard and two cavalry regiments of the line show themselves hostile to the outbreak."

"Poor soldiers!" replied the linen-draper, sadly, "they, like we, are forced to submit to that terrible fatality which arms brothers against each other. But I hope that this conflict will be the last. Have you seen your grandfather, George, and reassured him?"

"Yes, I left him but a moment since. In spite of his age and weakness, he wished to come with me; I persuaded him to stay at home."

"My wife and daughter are yonder," said the linen-draper, pointing to the light that gleamed through the blinds of the second story; "they are busy scraping lint for the wounded. Our shop is to be turned into a hospital."

Suddenly the cry of "Stop thief!" was heard in the street, and a man rushed by at full speed, but was instantly overtaken and arrested by five or six workingmen, dressed in blouses and armed with guns. Among them was a rag-picker, with a long, gray beard, but agile and robust, dressed in rags and still carrying his bag on his back, although he held a musket in his hand. He was one of the first to arrest the fugitive, whom he held with a firm grasp by the collar, when a woman came running up, panting and shouting with all her might, "Stop thief!"

"Has this youngster robbed you, dame?" said the rag-picker.

"Yes, my good man," she answered; "I was standing on my door-step, when this man came up and said, 'The people are rising, we must have arms.' 'I have none,' said I. 'Well, if you have no arms, I must have money to buy some,' said he. Pushing me aside and forcing his way into my shop, he opened the money-drawer, and took from it thirty-two francs and a gold watch. I tried to stop him; he drew a knife on me, but, fortunately, I caught the blow on my hand. See how it bleeds. I screamed, and he fled."

The accused was a well-dressed man, but his face was a villainous one, bearing the ineffaceable stamp of hardened vice.

"It is not true; I am not guilty," cried he in a husky voice, struggling to avoid being searched. "Let me go! Besides, what business is it of yours?"

"Wait a bit and you will see whether it is our business, my youngster," answered the rag-picker, holding him fast. "You have stabbed this poor woman after robbing her, in the name of the people. What have you to say for yourself? Speak quick."

"Here is the watch already," said a workingman, who was searching the thief.

"Can you tell us what sort of a watch it was, madam?"

"Yes, indeed; it was a very thick, old-fashioned one."

"This answers the description exactly. Here, take it."

"And in his jacket-pocket," said another man, continuing the search, "are six hundred-sous pieces and a forty-sous piece."

"My thirty-two francs!" cried the shop-woman; "thank you, kind gentlemen, thank you."

"And now, youngster, you must settle accounts with us," said the rag-picker. "So you have robbed and tried to murder in the name of the people, eh?"

"Come, come, friends, are we not in the midst of a revolution?" replied the thief in a hoarse voice, with a vicious laugh. "It is the time to break open tills."

"Is that what you call revolution, then; breaking open tills?" asked the rag-picker.

"And why not?"

"Do you think that the people rise in insurrection only for the sake of plunder, thief that you are?"

"What else have you risen for, then, you hypocrites—for the sake of honor, eh?" replied the robber, audaciously.

The group of armed men who surrounded the robber, the shop-keeper excepted, consulted together for a moment in a low voice. One of them, spying a grocer's shop half open, entered it; two others separated from the group, saying, "Let us speak to Lebrenn and ask his advice;" and another whispered a few words in the ear of the rag-picker, who said, "I agree with you; it is just. An example is needed. But, meanwhile, send Flameche here to help me hold this rascal."

"Here, Flameche!" cried a voice, "come and help Father Bribri to hold the robber."

Flameche ran thither. He was a true type of the Parisian *gamin*. This child, who did not seem more than twelve, though in reality he was sixteen, was haggard, puny, and emaciated with want. He was dressed in a pair of ragged, old, madder trowsers, worn shoes, and a blue shirt almost in rags, and was armed with a horse-pistol. He came up, hopping and skipping, in fine spirits.

"Flameche," said Father Bribri, "is your pistol loaded?"

"Yes, with two marbles, three nails and a huckle-bone; I have stuffed in my all."

"That will be enough to feast this gentleman with if he stirs. Attention, Flameche, put your finger on the trigger, and the barrel inside the fellow's shirt."

"That is it, Father Bribri," and Flameche dexterously introduced the muzzle of his pistol between the robber's shirt and his skin.

The man started back.

"Don't stir, don't stir!" cried the boy, "you will set Azor to barking."

"Flameche means his pistol," added the rag-picker, by way of translation.

"Come, come, you droll fellows," cried the robber, no longer struggling, but beginning to tremble, although he strove to laugh, "what do you want of me? Let me off; the joke has gone far enough."

"Wait a minute, youngster," replied the rag-picker; "let us talk a bit. You asked me just now why we rose in insurrection. I will tell you. In the first place, it is not to break open tills and plunder shops. Wretch! the shop belongs to the shop-keeper as much as my hook belongs to me. Every one has his trade. We rise, youngster, because we are tired of seeing old men like me dying of hunger in the by-ways, like worn-out dogs when their strength is gone; we rise, youngster, because we are tired of being told that out of a hundred poor girls that walk the streets at night, ninety-five have been reduced to it by poverty; we rise, my lad, because we are tired of seeing thousands of bright lads, like Flameche, thrown on the streets of Paris, without fire or shelter, father or mother—abandoned to the tender mercies of the devil, and exposed to the risk of some day becoming thieves and murderers like you, youngster, for want of a piece of bread."

"Have no fears of that, Father Bribri," interrupted Flameche, "I have no need to steal. I help you and the other rag-dealers to unload your baskets and sort your pickings; I live on the leavings of those dogs of aristocrats, and sleep like a king in a hole in your heap of rags. Have no fears, Father Bribri, I have no need to steal. For my part, if I rise, it is because I am tired of not being allowed to catch gold-fish in the great pond of the Tuileries. And I will fish there as much as I like if we are conquerors! Every one to his taste. Hurrah for Reform, and down with Louis Philippe!" Then, addressing the robber, who, on seeing the armed men returning, made a motion as if to escape, "Don't stir," cried he, "or I will set Azor on you!" and he pressed his finger on the trigger of the pistol.

"But what are you going to do with me?" exclaimed the robber, turning pale at the sight of three workmen preparing their arms, while another quitted the grocer's shop with a piece of brown paper in his hand, on which something was freshly written with a brush and blacking. A sinister presentiment flashed across the thief's mind; he cried, as he struggled to release himself, "You accuse me of stealing; take me before the Police Commissioner."

"The Commissioner's daughter is to be married to-day," said Father Bribri; "he is at the wedding."

"He has got the toothache; he is at the dentist's," added Flameche.

"Bring the robber near the lamp," said a voice.

"I tell you to take me to the Commissioner's," repeated the wretch, struggling; then beginning to shout with all his might, "Help! help!"

"If you know how to read, read this," said a workman, putting the paper before

his eyes; "if not, I will read it for you: '*Shot as a robber!*'"

"Shot!" murmured the man, turning livid. "Shot! Pardon! Help! Murder! Watch! Murder!"

"An example is needed for such as you, youngster, that you may not dishonor the people's insurrection," said Father Bribri.

"On your knees, villain!" cried a blacksmith, who still wore his leather apron. "Take aim, my friends. On your knees!" he repeated to the robber, forcing him down on the pavement.

The wretch fell on his knees, so paralyzed and crushed by fear that he could only stretch out his arms, half fainting, and murmur in a dying voice, "Oh! forgive me! Not death!"

"You are afraid," said the rag-picker. "Wait, I will blindfold you." And, unfastening his bag from his shoulders, he almost covered the crouching criminal with it, raised him from the ground, and quickly retired.

Three shots were heard. The people's justice was accomplished. A few moments after, the corpse of the wretch was swinging in the night wind, suspended under the armpits from the lamp-post, with the placard fastened to his clothes:

SHOT AS A ROBBER!

CHAPTER X.

SHORTLY after the execution of the robber, day began to dawn. Suddenly, the men placed as sentinels at the corners of the streets nearest the barricade, which rose almost to the height of Madame Lebrenn's room, fell back, crying, "To arms!" after discharging their guns. The drums, which till then had been silent, were instantly heard to beat the march, and two companies of the Municipal Guard, issuing from the side street, advanced resolutely to carry the barricade, which was instantly manned by a crowd of combatants. Lebrenn, his son, George Duchêne, and their friends, took their posts and loaded their guns. Father Bribri, who was a great lover of snuff, and who foresaw that he should not have leisure to indulge in his favorite luxury, took a huge pinch for the last time, and knelt before a sort of loop-hole contrived between two paving-stones, while Flameche, with pistol in hand, climbed like a cat to the top of the barricade.

"Come down, you scapegrace," cried the rag-picker, pulling him by the leg, "and don't show your face, unless you want to get peppered."

"Don't be afraid, Father Bribri," answered Flameche, twisting himself loose from the old man's grasp; "the show is gratis. I am going to treat myself to a front box, so as to get a good sight of it." Upon which, leaning half-way over the barricade, he began to make faces at the Municipal Guard, who continued to advance.

"These soldiers are our brothers, after all," said Lebrenn to those around him; "let us try once more to prevent the spilling of blood."

"You are right. Try again," said the blacksmith, clicking his gun-lock; "but you will see that it will be lost pains."

The linen-draper climbed to the top of the heap of paving-stones, where, supporting himself with one hand by his gun, while he waved his handkerchief with the other, he made signs to the soldiers that he wished to parley with them. The drums ceased to beat the charge, and rolled out the signal for silence.

At one of the second-story windows of the linen-draper's house, his wife and daughter, half concealed by the blinds which they held partly open, stood side by side, pale, but calm and resolute, with their eyes fixed on Lebrenn—who was talking to the soldiers—and his son, who had crossed the barricade, with his gun in hand, in order to be able to protect his father with his body, if necessary. George Duchêne was about to join them, when he felt some one pull his blouse. He turned, and saw Pradeline, her face flushed, and panting from her rapid flight.

"Don't stand there, my child, it is too dangerous;" said the defenders of the barricade, looking at the young girl with astonishment, as she strove to force her way through them in order to reach George.

"You here!" exclaimed George, astounded at the sight of Pradeline.

"O George! listen to me," answered she, in a supplicating tone; "I went to your house twice yesterday without being able to find you. I wrote to you that I would come again this morning. I have crossed several barricades to see you and tell you—"

"Go away," cried George, alarmed for her. "You will be killed. This is no place for you."

"I came to do you a service, George. I—"

She was unable to finish. Lebrenn, after parleying in vain with the captain of the Municipal Guard, turned round, crying, "They will have war, then war let it be! Wait for their fire, and then return it."

The Municipal Guard fired, the insurgents replied, and a cloud of smoke soon hung over the barricade. A fire was kept up from the neighboring windows and the cellar-gratings, and George Duchêne's old grandfather might have been seen at his attic-window, discharging a volley of fur-

niture, in default of other ammunition, on the heads of the Municipal Guard that were attacking the barricade behind which his grandson was fighting — household and kitchen furniture, tables, chairs—everything, in short, that would go through the window, was hurled by the good man with almost comical fury, until finally, his missiles exhausted, he flung his cotton night-cap in despair at the troops, then looking around him in desperation at having no more ammunition, he uttered a cry of triumph, and began tearing the slates within his reach from the roof and throwing them with all his might at the soldiers.

The attack was begun with spirit; the Municipal Guard, after returning the fire of their enemies by firing in platoons, intrepidly charged with the bayonet. Through the thick white smoke which hung over the top of the barricade, several groups could be distinguished; in one, Lebrenn, after discharging his musket, was using it as a club with which to beat back the assailants, vigorously seconded by his son and George, who kept close by his side. From time to time, as they fought, the father and son cast rapid glances at the half-opened lattice, from which the exclamations reached their ears, "Courage, Marik; courage, my son! Courage, father; courage, brother!" A stray bullet shattered one of the blinds behind which the two heroic women were standing. Like true Gauls, they did not wince, but remained within sight of their relatives. After bravely fighting hand to hand with a captain and overthrowing him, as Lebrenn rose to his feet, still staggering on the tottering stones, a soldier who was standing on the top of the barricade within reach of the linen-draper, raised his bayonet and was about to transfix him, when George threw himself forward to meet the blow, and fell, his arm pierced through and through. The soldier was about to repeat the thrust when his legs were seized by two puny hands which clung to him with the convulsive force of despair. He lost his balance and rolled head foremost to the other side of the barricade. George owed his life to Pradeline, who, as brave as a lion, with disheveled hair and flushed cheek, had managed to approach him during the conflict. Just as she had saved him, a bullet rebounded and struck the young girl in the side. She fell on her knees, fainting, and with her last look seeking George, who did not suspect the young girl's devotion. Father Bribri saw her fall; he laid down his musket, ran to her and raised her from the ground, then looking round for a place of safety, he espied at the shop-door Madame Lebrenn and her daughter, who had just come down stairs, and were occupied, with Gildas and Jeanike, in transforming the shop into a hospital.

Gildas was beginning to get accustomed to fire. He assisted Father Bribri in carrying the dying Pradeline to the back shop, where Madame Lebrenn and her daughter administered all the relief in their power. Just as the rag-picker was quitting the shop, he saw at his feet a puny little body, dressed in madder trowsers and a ragged blue shirt, soaked with blood. "Poor Flameche!" cried the old man, stooping to pick up the child. "Are you hurt? It is nothing; courage, my boy!"

"I'm done for, Father Bribri," answered the child, in a feeble voice. "It is a pity; I can't go—to catch gold-fish—in the Tuileries." And he expired. A large tear trickled down the rough beard of the rag-picker. "Poor little devil; he was not bad," said he, with a sigh. "He dies as he lived, in the streets of Paris." Such was the end and the funeral oration of Flameche.

Just as the poor child breathed his last, George's grandfather, in spite of his weakness, left his room and hastened to the barricade. After expending all his ammunition, he had watched the tide of battle from his window and had seen his grandson fall. He sought him among the dead and wounded with heart-rending cries.

The resistance of the defenders of the barricade was so obstinate that the Municipal Guard, after losing a large number of men, was forced to fall back in good order. The firing had ceased a few moments, when a gun-shot was heard in a neighboring street, and the tramp of horses resounded on the pavement. A colonel of dragoons soon appeared in the rear of the barricade, followed by several riders, at the head of whom he was charging, sword in hand, on a band of the insurgents, who kept up a running fire in their retreat. It was Colonel de Plouernel, who had been separated from his regiment by a maneuver of the people, and was trying to open a way to the barricade, not expecting to find the street occupied at this place by the insurgents.

The combat, a moment suspended, began anew. The defenders thought at first that this handful of cavalry formed the advance guard of a regiment which was about to attack them in the rear, and thus to place them between two fires if the Municipal Guard returned to the charge. The fifteen or twenty dragoons commanded by Colonel de Plouernel were met by a volley of musketry; several of their number fell, and the colonel himself was hit; but, with his natural intrepidity, he buried his spurs in his horse's flanks, and exclaimed, brandishing his sword, "Dragoons, down with the rabble!" The animal made a prodigious leap and reached the foot of the bar-

ricade; but there, he stumbled on the loose stones and fell.

M. de Plouernel, though wounded and half buried under his horse, defended himself with heroic courage; his iron arm dealt a wound with each blow of his sword. He was about, however, to be overpowered by numbers, when, at the peril of his life, Lebrenn, aided by his son and George, though the latter was wounded, threw himself between the colonel and the assailants, who were exasperated by the struggle, and succeeded in drawing him from beneath his horse and pushing him into the shop.

"My friends," he cried, "these dragoons are alone and unable to resist us; disarm them; but let there be no useless carnage, they are our brethren."

"Quarter for the soldiers, but death to the colonel!" cried the men who had been pursued by the dragoons. "Death to the colonel!"

"Yes, yes," repeated several voices.

"No," cried the linen-draper, barring the door with his musket, while George placed himself by his side. "No, no; no carnage after battle; no cowardice!"

"The colonel shot down my brother at yonder street-corner," shrieked a man with blood-shot eyes and frothy lips, brandishing a sword. "Death to the colonel!"

"Yes, yes, death, death!" cried several threatening voices.

"No, you would not kill a wounded man! You would not kill an unarmed man!"

"Death! death!" was the reply.

"Well, come on. Let us see whether you have the heart to dishonor the cause of the people by a crime." With these words, the linen-draper, although ready to oppose this ferocity anew, stood aside, leaving the door free. The assailants stood mute, struck with his words. The man who sought to avenge his brother, sprang forward, however, with a cry of savage joy. He had already reached the threshold of the door, when George stopped him, and seizing his hands, exclaimed in a voice of deep emotion, "Would you avenge yourself by a murder? No, my brother, you are not an assassin." And, with tears in his eyes, he pressed him to his heart. The voice, gesture, tone, and expression of George, made so lively an impression on the would-be avenger, that he hung his head, threw away his sword, and, letting himself fall on a heap of paving-stones, buried his face in his hands and murmured through his sobs, "My brother, my poor brother!"

The conflict had ceased for some time. Sacrovir went in quest of information, and returned with the news that the king and the royal family had fled, that the troops were fraternizing with the people, that the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved, and that a provisional government was established at the Hôtel de Ville. The barricade of the Rue St. Denis, however, was still kept under military guard, and sentinels were posted to provide against fresh alarms. The ground was strewn with the dead of both parties. The wounded, both of the insurgents and the army, had been carried into several shops, which had been converted into hospitals, after the example of Lebrenn's. The soldiers were treated with the same care as those they had fought a few hours before. The women crowded around them, and the only thing to be complained of was the excess of zeal and the superabundance of the offers of service. Several of the Municipal Guard and an officer of dragoons, in the company of Colonel de Plouernel, having been made prisoners, they were distributed through different houses, from which they were soon able to depart, disguised as citizens, arm in arm with their adversaries of the morning.

Lebrenn's shop was overflowing with the wounded; one was stretched on the counter, the rest on mattresses hastily thrown on the floor. The shop-keeper and his family aided several surgeons of the neighborhood in applying the first dressing to the wounds, while Gildas distributed water, mixed with wine, to the patients, to cool their burning thirst. Among the last, side by side on the same mattress, were Father Bribri and a sergeant of the Municipal Guard, an old soldier, with a moustache as gray as the beard of the rag-picker. The latter, after delivering the funeral oration of Flameche, had received a ball in the leg, during the alarm caused by the dragoons. The sergeant, on his part, had been struck in the thigh with a ball, at the first attack on the barricade.

"Confound it, how I suffer!" murmured the sergeant, "and how thirsty I am; my throat is on fire!"

Father Bribri heard him, and seeing Gildas pass with a bottle of wine and water in one hand, and a basket of tumblers in the other, he cried, as if he had been in a tavern, "Waiter, eh! waiter, some drink for this old fellow; he is thirsty."

The sergeant, surprised and touched by this attention from his bed-fellow, rejoined, "Thank you, my veteran, I shall not refuse, for I am choking."

Gildas had filled a glass at the call of Father Bribri, which he handed to the soldier. The latter tried to sit up, but it was impossible, and he fell back, saying, "The deuce! I can't move; my thigh is broken."

"Wait, sergeant," said Father Bribri, "one of my paws is damaged, but my arms and thighs are sound." With these words, he raised the soldier with one arm

till he had finished drinking, then aided him to lie down again.

"Thank you for your trouble, my veteran," said the soldier.

"Don't speak of it, sergeant."

"Don't you think, old fellow, that it is rather droll that we should be exchanging civilities, when two hours ago we were letting fly at each other?"

"We won't talk about it; it is stupid work firing at each other."

"The more so, inasmuch as we bear each other no ill-will."

"The devil take me if I thought of blaming you for it, sergeant. Nevertheless, it may have been I that broke your thigh, while, without bearing the least grudge against me, you would have gladly ran a bayonet through me; consequently, I say again that it is folly to spit each other without the least ill-will."

"That is the pure truth."

"Then, sergeant, are you so very fond of Louis Philippe?"

"I? I don't care a farthing for him; all that I care for is to serve my time and retire. That is my opinion; what is yours, old boy?"

"I am for the republic, which will secure work and bread to all that need it."

"If that is the case, old fellow, I am for it too, for I have a poor brother, burdened with a family, who is out of work and suffering from want. What! is it for that you are fighting, my veteran? Upon my word, you are not in the wrong."

"Yet it was you, perhaps, that winged me just now; but I don't reproach you for it."

"How the deuce could I help it? Do we ever know why we fight? We are accustomed to obey orders; we are commanded to fire, and we fire, without giving ourselves much trouble about taking aim the first time, it is true. But the answer comes, we get warmed up, and then each one begins to think of keeping a whole skin."

"I believe you."

"When you are hit, or you see a comrade fall, the blood mounts to your head, the smell of powder makes you drunk, and you end by laying about you in good earnest."

"That is natural."

"It is all the same when you fight at your musket's length, you see; but when once you come hand to hand with the bayonet, and hear the same tongue, as you look each other in the eyes, somehow you feel your arm give way; it is not as if you were fighting a real enemy."

"I understand, sergeant,; it is because you say to yourself, 'These fellows wish for reform and a republic; all right, what harm do they do me? And then, do I not belong to the people as well as they? Have I not relatives and friends too among the people? The chances are a hundred to one that I ought to be of their opinion, instead of massacring them.'"

"That is so true, old fellow, that I am for the republic as well as you, if it can give bread and work to my poor brother, who is in want of them."

"Which leads me again to say, sergeant, that there is nothing more stupid than to knock each other over without the least notion why." With these words, Father Bribri, taking his old wooden snuff-box from his pocket, offered it to his companion, saying, Will you have a pinch?"

"Upon my word, it is not to be refused; it will clear my brain a little." Then, slowly inhaling the snuff, he exclaimed, "Ah! it is delicious!"

"It is my only luxury," said Father Bribri, taking a pinch in turn. "I always buy it at the Civette."

"That is just where my wife buys it for me."

"So you are married, sergeant? The devil! your poor wife must be dreadfully anxious!"

"Yes, for she is a good woman. And if my wound is not mortal, old fellow, you must come some day and take soup with us in a friendly way, eh! and we will crack a glass to the memory of the barricade of the Rue St. Denis."

"You are very kind, sergeant; your offer is not to be refused. And as I do not keep house, you and your wife must come and eat a rabbit stew with me in the suburbs."

"Agreed, old fellow."

At the moment when the civilian and the soldier were exchanging these civilities, Lebrenn, pale, and with tearful eyes, came from the back shop which had hitherto remained closed, and said to his wife, who was still occupied in taking care of the wounded, "My dear, will you come here a moment?"

Madame Lebrenn joined her husband, and the door of the back shop closed behind them. A sad spectacle presented itself to the eyes of the linen-draper's wife. Pradeline was stretched on a sofa, pale and dying. George Duchêne, with his arm in a sling, was kneeling beside the young girl, holding a drink to her lips. At the sight of Madame Lebrenn, the poor creature tried to smile, and summoning up her strength, said, in a feeble voice, "Madam, I wished to see you before dying, to tell you the truth about George. I was an orphan, an artificial-flower maker. I had suffered great distress and great want, but I had remained virtuous. I ought to say, that I had never been tempted," she added with a bitter smile; then resumed, "I met George on his return from the army. I fell in love with

him—I loved him, oh! dearly; he was the only one I ever loved, perhaps because he never was my lover. I loved him, doubtless, better than he did me; he was more worthy of it; it was through goodness of heart that he asked me to be his wife. Unhappily, a friend was the cause of my ruin; she had been a workwoman, like me, and had sold herself through poverty. I met her; she was rich and brilliant; she urged me to follow her example; my head was turned, and I forgot George—not long, however; but for nothing in the world would I have ventured again in his sight. But sometimes I came to this street, and lingered in hopes to catch a glimpse of him. I saw him more than once, madam, at work in your house. I saw him talking with your daughter, who appeared to me as beautiful as the day. A presentiment told me that he must love her; I watched him, and often, lately, have I seen him in the morning at his window, gazing at yours. Yesterday I was at some one's house;" here a faint blush of shame dyed the young girl's cheek, she cast down her eyes, and resumed, in a voice that grew more and more broken, "there I learned by chance that this person thought your daughter very beautiful, and as this person shrinks from nothing, I became alarmed for your daughter and George. I tried to warn him yesterday, but he was not at home; I wrote to him asking to see him, without explaining why. This morning I left home—without knowing—about the barricades—and—"

The young girl was unable to finish; her head fell backward, she mechanically raised both hands to her wounded side and stammered a few unintelligible words, while Lebrenn and his wife wept in silence.

"Josephine," said George, "do you suffer more? She received her death-wound while attempting to save me," he added, brushing his hand across his eyes.

"George," exclaimed the young girl, feebly, with a bewildered air, "you do not know—" And she attempted to laugh. This laugh in the midst of the death-struggle was heart-rending.

"Poor child, you do not know what you are saying," said Madame Lebrenn.

"They call me Pradeline," repeated the unhappy creature, deliriously, "because I am always singing."

"The unfortunate girl! she is raving," said Lebrenn.

"George," she continued, now quite delirious, "shall I sing for you?" And with her dying voice, she improvised these words to her favorite air,

"I feel death upon me,
Well, if it must be—
Yet is it not early
To die——"

She did not finish—her arms stiffened—her head fell on her shoulders—she was dead!

Just at this instant, Gildas opened the door communicating with a staircase that led to the next story, and said to the linen-draper, "Sir, the colonel up stairs wishes to speak with you directly."

Night had set in. Lebrenn repaired to his bed-chamber, to which the colonel had been taken through precaution. M. de Plouernel had received two slight wounds and some severe bruises. He had taken off his uniform to facilitate the dressing of his wounds. Lebrenn found his guest standing, pale and gloomy.

"Sir," said he, "my wounds are not severe enough to prevent me from quitting your house. I shall never forget your generous conduct toward me, a conduct doubly praiseworthy after what passed between us yesterday. My only wish is to be able some day to repay the debt. But that will be difficult, sir, for we are the conquered and you the conquerors. I was blind to the true state of affairs; this sudden revolution has enlightened me. The day of the people's triumph has arrived. We have had our time, as you told me yesterday; your turn has come."

"I believe it, sir. Now let me give you a word of advice. It would be imprudent for you to go out in your uniform; the popular excitement is not yet calmed. I will give you a paletot and a round hat; by the aid of this disguise and accompanied by one of my friends, you can reach your house in safety."

"It is not to be thought of, sir. Disguise myself! it would be cowardly."

"Excuse me, sir, but these are exaggerated scruples. Are you not conscious of having fought bravely to the end?"

"Yes, to be disarmed, disarmed by—" Interrupting himself, he stretched his hand to the linen-draper, saying, "Forgive me, sir, I forget that I am conquered. So be it; I will follow your advice, and put on a disguise without thinking myself guilty of cowardice. A man whose conduct is as worthy as yours must be a good judge of honor."

In an instant, M. de Plouernel was dressed as a citizen, thanks to the clothes lent him by the shop-keeper. Then, pointing to his battered helmet, by the side of his torn uniform, he said, "I entreat you, sir, to keep my helmet in default of my sword, which I would have gladly left you as a memento of a soldier whose life you have generously saved."

"I accept it, sir," answered the linen-draper; "I will add this helmet to two other mementoes of your family which are in my possession."

"Of my family!" cried M. de Plouernel, in amazement; "of my family! Are you acquainted with it?"

"Alas! sir," replied Lebrenn, with a thoughtful and melancholy air; "it is not the first time that a Neroweg de Plouernel and a Lebrenn have met with arms in their hands."

"What do you say?" asked the count, more and more surprised. "Explain yourself, I entreat you."

A knock at the door interrupted the conversation. "Who is there?" asked the linen-draper.

"It is I, father."

"Come in, my son."

"Father," said Sacrovir, eagerly, "several of our friends are below; they have just come from the Hôtel de Ville, and are waiting for you."

"My child," replied Lebrenn, "you are as well known as I in the street; I wish you to accompany our guest. Go down the back staircase, so as not to pass through the shop."

"Yes, father."

"And do not quit M. de Plouernel till he is safely lodged in his own house."

"Be easy, father; I have just crossed the barricades twice. I will answer for his safety."

"Excuse me for leaving you, sir," said the linen-draper, "but my friends are waiting for me."

"Adieu!" replied the colonel, in a voice of emotion. "I know not what the future may have in store for us. We may find ourselves again in opposite camps; but I swear to you never henceforth to regard you as an enemy."

M. de Plouernel followed Sacrovir. The linen-draper, left alone, gazed for an instant at the helmet, and exclaimed, "Ah! there are strange fatalities!" He took the colonel's memento, and deposited it in the mysterious room which had so warmly excited Gildas's curiosity; then joined his friends, who informed him that there was no longer a doubt that the Republic would be proclaimed by the Provisional Government assembled at the Hôtel de Ville.

CHAPTER XI.

1848—1849.

After the battle and the victory comes the inauguration of the triumph and the glorification of the ashes of the victims!

A few days after the overthrow of Louis Philippe, at ten o'clock in the morning, the populace crowded the thoroughfares leading to the Church of La Madeleine, the façade of which was entirely shrouded with heavy black and silver drapery. On the front of the monument was inscribed the words: "The French Republic—*Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity!*" An immense throng filled the boulevards, where two rows of high biers stretched from the Bastille to the Place de la Madeleine. The day was set apart for paying funeral honors to the citizens who had fallen in February in defense of liberty. A double cordon of the National Guard, commanded by the worthy General Courtais, with a veteran in the republican cause—the brave Guinard—as the second in command, lined both sides of the street. The people were grave and stern, and showed themselves impressed with the consciousness of their new sovereignty, won by the blood of their brethren.

The cannon soon sounded, and the patriotic notes of the "Marseillaise" rose in the air. The members of the Provisional Government arrived, the citizens Dupont (of the Eure), Ledru Rollin, Arago, Louis Blanc, Albert, Flocon, Lamartine, Crémieux, Garnier-Pagès, and Marrast. They slowly mounted the steps of the church. These citizens, charged with the destinies of France at this epoch, were distinguished only by tricolored scarfs worn across the shoulder.

In their train, abjuring the royalty which they had so long flattered, and sanctioning the republic and popular sovereignty by the mere fact of their presence at this solemn ceremony, came the great bodies of State—the upper magistracy in their crimson robes; the scientific bodies, clad in their official costume, and the marshals and generals in full uniform—all going to pray, with their lips, if not with their hearts, for the memory of those whom the day before they had treated with lofty disdain as rioters and insurgents. Enthusiastic shouts of "Long live the Republic!" broke forth on the passage of these dignitaries, the most of whom — always the courtiers of the reigning *régime*, and at this moment professed converts to republicanism — had grown old in the service of the Crown, as they had been wont to say. These stern cries seemed to remind them of the solemnity of their profession. More than one man in a crimson robe or a laced coat, with a brow still blanched by the fear of yesterday, smiled with an air of constraint, more surprised than touched by the grave and calm forbearance of the heroic people —those people who, by their words, their acts, their privations, their protection of person and property in the absence of all organized public military force, proved, by showing themselves so jealous with respect to their duties, that they were worthy of the sovereign rights which they had just regained.

All the windows looking out on the Place de la Madeleine were filled with spectators. On the ground-floor of the shop of one of Lebrenn's friends were Mad-

ame Lebrenn and her daughter, both clad in black, together with Lebrenn, Sacrovir, Father Morin, and George Duchêne, with his arm in a sling. The two latter now formed part of the linen-draper's family; Lebrenn and his wife having given their formal consent, two days before, to their daughter's marriage. The beautiful features of Velleda wore an expression of profound happiness, subdued by the imposing character of the ceremony, which inspired the whole family with religious awe.

When the funeral procession had entered the church and the "Marseillaise" had ceased, Lebrenn exclaimed, his eyes moist with emotion, "Oh! this is a great day; it is the inauguration of our republic, free from all excess, proscription, and stains. Clement in its strength and right, and fraternal like its symbol, its first thought has been to overthrow the political scaffold—that scaffold which, had it been conquered, it would have watered with its purest and most glorious blood. See, loyal and generous, it now invites to a solemn compact of forgetfulness, pardon and concord, sworn on the ashes of these last martyrs to our liberties, those magistrates and generals but lately the implacable foes of the republicans, whom they pursued with the sword of the law and of the army. Oh! it is glorious and noble thus to extend a friendly and peaceful hand to our foes of yesterday!"

"My children," said Madame Lebrenn, "let us hope and believe that these martyrs to liberty, whose ashes we honor today, will be the last victims to royalty!"

"Oh, yes, for liberty is everywhere awakening," cried Sacrovir, with enthusiasm. "Revolutions are breaking out at Vienna, Milan and Berlin. Each day brings the news that the republican thunders in France are shaking all the thrones of Europe. There is an end, at last, to kings!"

"An army on the Rhine, another on the frontiers of Piedmont, to march to the aid of our brethren of Europe, should they need us, and republicanism will put a girdle round the world!" said George Duchêne. "Then there will be no more war. Is it not so, M. Lebrenn? Then we shall have union, fraternity of nations, universal peace, industry, work and happiness for all. There will be no more insurrections, for the peaceful conflict of universal suffrage will henceforth take the place of these fratricidal struggles, in which so many of our brethren have perished."

"Oh!" cried Velleda, whose eyes had followed her betrothed as he spoke, "how happy we are in living in these times! What great and noble things we shall behold! Shall we not, father?"

"To doubt it, my children, would be to doubt the continual onward march of humanity," answered Lebrenn. "And humanity never goes backward."

"May God hear you, M. Lebrenn," cried Father Morin. "Old as I am, I shall have my humble share in this glorious spectacle. But it is greedy in me to desire it," added the good man, looking tenderly at Velleda. "What more ought I to wish for, now that I see this good and beautiful young lady about to become my grandson's wife; now that he is adopted into this excellent family, in which the daughter is worthy of her mother and the son of his father? Ah! when a man of my age has lived to see all this, he has nothing more to wish for, and can depart with a contented heart."

"Would you depart, good father," said Madame Lebrenn, taking the old man's trembling hand, "and leave those who love you?"

"And who feel themselves doubly happy," added Velleda, taking the other hand of the old man, "in knowing that you witness their happiness."

"And who hope long to honor industry, courage and uprightness in you, Father Morin," added Sacrovir, with an air of respectful deference; while the old man, more and more affected, buried his face in his trembling hands.

"What! do you fancy that you are not our grandfather too?" said Lebrenn, smiling. "Do you think that you do not belong to us too, now, as well as to our dear George? As if our affections were not his, and his ours!"

"Oh heaven!" cried the old man, his eyes overflowing with tears of delight, "what can I say? It is too much—too much; I can only thank you by my tears. George, you know how to talk—speak for me."

"That is very easy for you to say, grandfather," answered George, not less affected than the old man.

"Father, look! look!" cried Sacrovir, advancing toward the window. "Oh! brave and generous people!" he added with enthusiasm.

At the voice of the youth, all ran to the window. In the street, which had been cleared for the passage of the funeral train, marched a long procession of workingmen, carrying upon their shoulders a sort of buckler, trimmed with ribbons, in the midst of which was placed a wooden contribution-box; a flag followed, bearing the inscription, "*Long live the Republic! Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.* OUR OFFERING TO THE COUNTRY." The multitude cheered, shouting "Long live the Republic!"

"Oh! I know them well!" cried the linen-draper, his eyes wet with tears. "They are the laborers; those who uttered that sublime saying, 'We have three months of a wretched life at the service of the Re-

public;' those poor men who are the first to suffer in hard times. Yet they are the first to offer the country the little they possess; half of their morrow's bread, perhaps."

"And shall not these unfortunates, who set such an example to the rich and happy of the day—shall not these men, who show such generosity, heart, resignation, and patriotism, at last be released from their serfdom?" cried Madame Lebrenn. "Shall their intelligence and hard labor always be barren to themselves alone? To them shall a family always be anguish—the present, privation—the future, terror, and property, a tantalizing dream? No, no, God is just! Those who triumph so nobly have finally climbed their Calvary! Their day of justice has come. And I say, with your father, my children, this is a great and glorious day; a day of equity, a day of justice, unpolluted by revenge!"

"And these sacred words are the symbol of the deliverance of the working classes," said Lebrenn, pointing to the inscription on the temple of Christ—*Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity!*

Nearly eighteen months after this day, so imposing through this religious ceremonial, and so rich in the magnificent hopes which it gave to France, we again meet the Lebrenn family.

It was the first of September, 1849. The dinner-hour had struck in the galleys at Rochefort, and the convicts were at their repast. One of the galley-slaves, dressed like the rest, in a red jacket and cap, and wearing on his ankle an iron ring riveted to a heavy chain, was seated on a stone, munching his black bread with a thoughtful air.

This convict was Lebrenn. He had been condemned to the galleys by a court-martial, after the insurrection of June, 1848. The features of the shop-keeper wore their usual expression of serene firmness; his face, however, exposed, through his hard labor, to the scorching rays of the sun, had become almost the color of a brick.

A keeper, with a sword at his side and a stick in his hand, after passing through several groups of convicts, stopped, as if looking for some one, and cried, waving his stick in the direction of Lebrenn, "Say, you, there! Number Eleven-hundred-and-twenty!"

The shop-keeper paid no attention, but continued to munch his bread with a good appetite.

"Number Eleven-hundred-and-twenty—don't you hear me, rascal?" cried the keeper anew.

Lebrenn still remained silent. The keeper, swearing at being obliged to walk a few steps farther, hurried to the linen-draper, and touching him with the end of his stick, said to him roughly, "Curse you, are you deaf? Why don't you answer, brute that you are?"

On feeling the touch of the stick, Lebrenn looked up angrily; then, quickly suppressing this impulse of indignation, he answered calmly, "What do you want?"

"This is twice that I have called you, Eleven-hundred-and-twenty, without receiving an answer. Do you want to make me angry? Take care!"

"Come, there is no need of being brutal," replied Lebrenn, shrugging his shoulders. "I did not answer you, because I have not yet lost the habit of hearing myself called by my name, and always forget that I am nothing now but Eleven-hundred-and-twenty."

"I want no more of your reasons. Come, you are to go before the commissioner."

"For what?"

"That is none of your business. Come, march, and that quickly."

"I am ready," said Lebrenn, with imperturbable calmness.

The keeper, followed by the convict, crossed part of the docks, and arrived at the office of the commissioner intrusted with the charge of the galleys.

"Tell the commissioner that I have brought him Number Eleven-hundred-and-twenty," said he to one of his comrades in waiting.

In a few moments the servant returned, and telling the shop-keeper to follow him, led him through a long corridor; then, opening the door of a richly-furnished room, bid him go in and wait.

"What!" said Lebrenn, in great surprise; "do you leave me alone?"

"It is by the commissioner's orders."

"The devil!" said Lebrenn, smiling; "I am highly flattered by such a mark of confidence."

The servant left the room, closing the door after him.

"Really," said the shop-keeper, spying a luxurious easy-chair, "here is a fine chance to sit on something besides a stone or the benches of the galleys. An easy-chair is certainly a very comfortable thing," he added, settling himself among the soft cushions. A door opened at this moment, and a man of tall stature, in the undress uniform of a brigadier-general — a blue coat with silver stars, and red trowsers—entered the room. At the sight of the officer, Lebrenn threw himself back in his chair, exclaiming, "M. de Plouernel!"

"Who has not forgotten the night of the 23d of February," answered the general, advancing, with outstretched hand, toward Lebrenn, who took it, gazing thoughtfully at the two silver stars that ornamented M. de Plouernel's gold epaulettes, and said, with a sort of ironical good-nature:

"You have become a general in the service of the Republic, while I am in the galleys! Confess, sir, that this is a curious freak of fortune!"

M. de Plouernel looked at the shop-keeper with amazement; he had expected to find him either deeply dejected or violently incensed, and he saw him calm, satirical, and smiling.

"Well, sir," resumed Lebrenn, still seated, while the general stood gazing at him with increasing amazement, "some eighteen months ago—at the time of that evening which you are good enough to remember—who would have thought that we should find ourselves in the respective positions in which we stand to-day?"

"Such firmness of soul is heroism!" exclaimed M. de Plouernel, forced to render homage to the truth.

"Not at all, sir; it simply comes from a good conscience and confidence in the future."

"Confidence in the future?"

"Yes. I am calm, because I have faith in the cause to which I have devoted my life, and because I have nothing for which to reproach my conscience."

"Yet—you are here."

"I pity the error of my judges."

"You, the soul of honor, in the garb of infamy!"

"Bah! That does not hurt me."

"Away from your wife and children!"

"They are often here with me as I am with them. The body is chained and separated from them, but the soul laughs at fetters and space." Then, suddenly breaking off, Lebrenn added, "But pray, tell me, sir, by what chance do I see you here? The Commissioner of the Galleys has sent for me; was it only to afford me the pleasure of receiving your visit?"

"You judge me wrongly," replied the general, "if you think that, after owing my life to you, I come here through a feeling of idle or impertinent curiosity."

"I do not insult you by such a thought, sir. Doubtless, you are on a tour of inspection?"

"Yes."

"And having learned that I was here in the galleys, you come, perhaps, to offer me your good services?"

"Better than that."

"Better than that!" Explain yourself, I entreat you. You seem embarrassed."

"Indeed, I am so, and greatly," replied the general, evidently put out of countenance by the coolness and ease of the convict. "Revolutions often bring about such strange events—"

"Such strange events?"

"Yes, such as the position in which we find each other to-day."

"Oh! we have already exhausted the subject of this apparent incongruity of fate," rejoined the shop-keeper, smiling. "That, under the Republic, I, an old republican, should be in the galleys, while you—a republican of a little later date—should have become a general, is, indeed, somewhat strange; that we have agreed But what then?"

"My embarrassment springs from a different cause."

"What?"

"I have asked—" replied M. de Plouernel, hesitatingly.

"You have asked for what, sir?"

"And obtained—"

"My pardon, perhaps," exclaimed Lebrenn. "That is delightful!"

There was such bitter ludicrousness in this incident of political manners and customs, that the shop-keeper could not help laughing.

"Yes," returned the general, "I have asked for your pardon, and obtained it. You are free. I held it a point of honor to come in person to bring you the news."

"One word of explanation, if you please, sir," returned the shop-keeper, with dignity. "I do not accept a pardon, but I accept an act of reparatory, although tardy justice."

"What do you mean?"

"If, at the time of the fatal insurrection of June, I had shared the opinions of my brethren who are here in the galleys with me, I should not accept a pardon; after acting with them, I should remain here with them."

"But your condemnation—"

"Was unjust, sir, as I will prove to you in a few words. At the time of the June outbreak last year, I held the rank of captain in my legion, and appeared unarmed at the summons of the National Guard. There, I declared openly and publicly that I would march unarmed at the head of my company, not to engage in a bloody struggle, but with the hope of soothing our brethren, who, exasperated by want, a deplorable misunderstanding, and, above all, repeated deceptions, should not, however, have forgotten that the sovereignty of the people is inviolable, and that so long as the power which represents it has not been legally brought to trial and convicted of treason, to rebel against this power, and to attack it by armed force instead of overthrowing it by the expression of universal suffrage, is to commit suicide and to attack their own sovereignty. Half of my company agreed with me and followed my example; and, while other citizens were accusing us of treason, we, bareheaded and unarmed, were advancing with outstretched arms toward the first barricade, the guns of which were aimed at our approach. Friendly hands already met our grasp;

our voice was heard; our brethren were already beginning to comprehend that, however justifiable were their grievances, an insurrection would be the temporary triumph of the enemies of the Republic—when a shower of bullets rained upon the barricade behind which we were parleying. Doubtless ignorant of this circumstance, a battalion of troops had attacked the position. Taken by surprise, the insurgents defended themselves like heroes; the greater part were killed—a few were taken prisoners. I and several of my company being confounded among them, were arrested and held as rebels. If I did not go mad with horror, like several of my friends who were prisoners with me in the vaults of the Tuileries for three days and nights, it is because I was with my wife and children in thought. Indicted before a court-martial, I told the truth, but was not believed. Doubtless, some petty local jealousy—some base accusation brought by malicious neighbors—aggravated my punishment, and I was sent here. You see now, sir, that it is not a pardon, but a tardy act of justice that is accorded me; which does not prevent me, however, from thanking you kindly for all that you have done for me. Then I am free?"

"The Commissioner of the Marine is on his way to confirm what I tell you. You can quit this place to-day, this very moment, even."

"Well, sir, since you are so high in favor at the republican court," returned Lebrenn, smiling, "be kind enough to ask a boon from the commissioner which he might perhaps refuse me."

"I shall be happy to do anything in my power."

"You see this iron ring which I wear on my leg, fastened to a chain; I should be glad to carry it away with me—paying for it, of course."

"That ring! What can you want of it?"

"It is simply the mania of a collector, sir. I already possess a few little historical curiosities; among others the helmet which you did me the honor to bestow on me eighteen months ago. I wish to add to them the iron ring of the political convict. You see, sir, that to me and my family, this relic will be of great significance."

"Nothing will be easier, I think, than to gratify your desire, of which I will inform the commissioner. But allow me to ask you a question, which may, however, be indiscreet."

"What is it, sir?"

"I remember that eighteen months ago—and I have often since thought of it—when I entreated you to keep my helmet in memory of your generous conduct toward me, you replied—"

"That this would not be the only thing coming from your family that I possessed—it was the truth."

"You also told me, sir, I believe, that the Neroweg de Plouernels—"

"Had sometimes, in the course of ages and events, encountered several members of my obscure family—slaves, serfs, vassals or plebeians," returned Lebrenn. "It is also true."

'On what occasion and in what circumstances? And how came you informed of what took place so many centuries ago?"

"Permit me to keep my secret, and excuse me for having inconsiderately awakened in you a curiosity that I cannot satisfy. Under the impression of that day of civil war and the strange fatality which had brought you and me face to face, an allusion to the past escaped me. I regret it, for, I repeat to you, there are certain family recollections which should never go beyond our own hearth."

"I will no longer insist," said M. de Plouernel; then, after a moment's hesitation, he added, "One word more, sir. I have another question to ask, which may also be indiscreet."

"What is it?"

"What do you think of me, on seeing me serve the Republic?"

"Such a question, sir, demands a perfectly candid answer."

"I am convinced that you could give me no other."

"Well, you do not believe in the duration of the Republic; you design to make use of the power with which you, together with so many other perjured royalists, are intrusted by the government, to secure the future triumph of your party. You hope, in short, at the proper moment, to avail yourself of your position in the army to favor the return of your master, as I believe you call that fat lad, the last of the Capets and Frankish kings by right of conquest. The Bonaparte government puts arms into your hands against the Republic, you accept them; in your sight, all stratagems are fair in war."

"And in yours?"

"I would not do it. I hate the monarchy for the frightful evils which it has heaped for many centuries on my country, where it established itself as a conqueror by violence, robbery and murder. Yes, I hate it, I have combated it with all my might, but never would I have served it with the design of destroying it, never would I have borne its livery or its colors."

"I do not wear the livery of the Republic, sir!" cried M. de Plouernel, eagerly, "I wear the uniform of the French army!"

"Come, sir," replied Lebrenn, smiling, "without meaning to reproach you, confess that what you said just now is a little Jesuitical for a soldier. But let it pass;

every one serves his cause in his own fashion."

The entrance of the Commissioner of Marine put an end to the conversation of the general and the shop-keeper. The latter easily obtained permission, through the mediation of his protector, to carry away his iron ring. The same evening Lebrenn set out for Paris.

CHAPTER XII.

On the 18th of September, 1849, two days after General de Plouernel had brought Lebrenn his full and complete pardon, the family of the linen-draper was assembled in the modest drawing-room. The shop had been closed about an hour before. A lamp, placed on a large center-table, threw its light on the persons seated around it. Madame Lebrenn was occupied with the books of the establishment; her daughter, dressed in mourning, was gently lulling a sleeping infant on her lap, while George Duchêne, in mourning, like his wife, for Father Morin, who had died a few months before, was drawing the plan of a wainscot; for since his marriage, by his father-in-law's desire, he had opened a large joiner's shop, on the principle of joint profits, in a building close by Lebrenn's house. Sacrovir Lebrenn was reading a treatise on the application of machinery to the weaving of linen, and taking notes from time to time from the book. Jeanike was hemming napkins, while Gildas was seated before a little table full of linen, folding and ticketing various articles to be displayed in the shop-window.

Madame Lebrenn's face was sad and thoughtful; such, doubtless, would have also been the expression of that of her daughter, then in the full lustre of her beauty, had not a smile been called forth at that moment by the crowing of the waking babe. George, for an instant attracted from his work by this infantile laughter, gazed at the maternal group with inexpressible delight. It might have been vaguely felt that some continual sorrow was hanging over this loving family; indeed, there was not a moment when they did not remember, with bitterness, that their beloved and venerated head was missing.

We will explain in a few words why Lebrenn's son and son-in-law had not followed his example at the time of the insurrection of June, 1848, and consequently shared his fate. In the beginning of that month, Madame Lebrenn had gone to Brittany to purchase goods, and to visit some of her relatives, accompanied by her daughter and son-in-law, then newly married and on their bridal tour. Sacrovir Lebrenn, for his part, had gone to Lille, to transact some business for his father. He was to have returned before his mother's departure, but he was detained by some matters, and did not learn till he reached Paris that his father had been arrested and imprisoned, as an insurgent, in the Castle of Vanvre.

At this distressing news, Madame Lebrenn and her children returned in haste from Brittany. It is needless to say that, while in prison, Lebrenn received all the consolation which the tenderness and devotion of his family could offer him. His sentence pronounced, his wife and children wished to follow him to Rochefort, and to settle there, in order, at least, to live in the same city with him and to see him often; but he strongly opposed this resolution as contrary to the convenience and interests of the family. His chief argument against a troublesome and disastrous removal was—and here his excellent judgment was mistaken—his full faith in a speedy general amnesty, and he induced his family to share the belief. They needed and wished to believe it too much to reject the hope. Days, weeks, and months passed by, therefore, in vain but constantly renewed expectation. Every day, the condemned man received a long joint letter from his wife and children, to which he daily replied; and, thanks to these frequent outpourings of the heart, as well as to the courage and serenity of his resolute character, he unfalteringly endured the terrible trial of which we are about to witness the end.

The family of the linen-draper was seated in silence around the center-table. Madame Lebrenn ceased writing for a moment and leaned her forehead on one hand, while the other, which held the pen, remained motionless. George Duchêne, seeing his mother-in-law's pre-occupation, made a sign to Velleda. Both gazed at her for a few moments, and her daughter at length said, "Mother you seem restless and anxious."

"For nearly thirteen months, this is the first day that we have had no letter from your father."

"If he had been sick and unable to write to you," said George, "he would have found some one else to do it, rather than render you uneasy by his silence. It is most likely, therefore, as we said just now, that his letter has, for the first time, met some delay."

"George is right, mother," added Velleda; "you must not be alarmed."

"And then, who knows?" said Sacrovir, bitterly. "The police regulations are so strange and despotic that they may even have deprived my father of his last consolation. Those men who govern us show such hatred to the republicans. Oh! we live in sad times."

"After dreaming of such a glorious future, to see it so gloomy and almost desperate!" exclaimed George, sighing, "M. Lebrenn—he, he treated thus! Ah! it is enough to make us believe that the triumph of honest men is never anything but an accident."

"Oh, brother, brother! I feel a terrible storm of revenge and hatred aroused within me!" said Sacrovir, gloomily. "Could I but have one day—a single day—in which to do justice, my whole life might be spent in torture."

"Patience, brother, patience!" said George. "Every one must have his day."

"My children," resumed Madame Lebrenn, in a grave and melancholy voice, "you speak of justice—do not mix with it thoughts of hatred and revenge. Your father, if he were here—and he is always with us—would tell you that he who has right on his side does not cherish hatred or seek revenge. Hatred and revenge make men mad; as they can testify who persecute your father and his party so implacably. Despise them, pity them, but do not imitate them."

"Yet to see what we see," exclaimed Sacrovir; "to think that my father, a man of tried honor, courage and patriotism, is at this moment in the galleys, that he is left there, and that our enemies feel a savage joy in knowing it!"

"How does this affect your father's honor, courage and patriotism, my children? Is it in the power of any mortal to brand what is pure, to degrade what is great, or to make an honest man a convict? Do you believe that your father, unjustly condemned, will be less honored by the mark of the convict's chain than by the scars that he received in 1830? When justice is done him, will he not quit the galleys more beloved and venerated than ever? What do these persecutions prove, my children? They prove only that hatred and revenge may become even more absurd than they are detestable; and we should feel naught but disgust and pity for what is detestable and absurd. Ah! my children, mourn your father's absence, but remember that each day leaves him greater and more honored."

"You are right, mother," replied Sacrovir, sighing. "Thoughts of hatred and revenge harm the soul."

"Poor father!" said Velleda, sadly, "he looked forward to to-morrow with such impatience!"

"To-morrow! and why?" asked George.

"To-morrow is my son's birthday," answered Madame Lebrenn. "To-morrow, the eleventh of September, he will be twenty-one, and for several reasons, this was to have been a family festival."

She had scarcely uttered the words when a knock was heard at the door.

"Who can have come at this hour? it is almost midnight," said Madame Lebrenn. "See who it is, Jeanike."

"I will go, madam," cried Gildas, bravely, rising. "There may be some danger."

"I do not think so; but go and see," returned Madame Lebrenn.

In a moment, Gildas returned with a letter, which he gave to Madame Lebrenn, saying, "A messenger brought this, madam. No answer is needed."

Scarcely had the linen-draper's wife cast her eyes on the envelope, when she cried, "My children, it is a letter from your father!" George, Sacrovir, and Velleda rose simultaneously and crowded round their mother. "It is singular," she resumed, anxiously examining the letter which she was unsealing. "This letter must have come from Rochefort, yet there is no post-mark on it."

"It may have been sent by some one coming from Rochefort," remarked George.

"And this has been the cause of the delay," added Sacrovir. "It is quite likely."

Madame Lebrenn anxiously hastened to read the following letter:

"MY DEAR AND LOVING WIFE:

Kiss our children in the name of a piece of good news which will surprise and delight you. I hope to see you shortly—"

Madame Lebrenn had scarcely uttered these words when it was impossible for her to continue her reading. Her children threw themselves on her neck with exclamations of joy which it would be impossible to repeat, while Jeanike and Gildas shared the emotions of the family.

"My poor children, be reasonable; let us not rejoice too soon," said Madame Lebrenn. "It is only a hope that your father holds out to us, and God knows how often our hopes of an amnesty have been deceived."

"Then go on, mother—read quickly—finish," cried the children, impatiently. "Let us see whether this hope is well-founded."

Madame Lebrenn continued her husband's letter: "I hope to see you soon, sooner even than you can imagine."

"Do you see, mother, do you see!" said the children with trembling voices, and hands clasped as though in prayer, "Finish, finish!"

"O God! can it be possible! We shall soon see him!" said Madame Lebrenn, wiping away the tears that dimmed her sight. She continued, "When I say *hope*, my dear wife, I mean more, it is a certainty. I should have commenced my letter by giving you this assurance; but, though I knew your strength of mind, I was afraid of hurting you and our children by too sudden a surprise. You are, therefore, already familiar with the idea of seeing me soon, very soon,

are you not? I can therefore promise you—"

"But, mother," interrupted George, "he must be in Paris."

"In Paris!" cried all with one voice.

"The letter is not postmarked," continued George. "He has arrived; he has sent it by a messenger."

"There is no more doubt—George is right," said Madame Lebrenn, hastily finishing the letter: "I can therefore promise you, that we will keep Sacrovir's birthday together. This day begins at midnight; I shall therefore be with you at midnight, and perhaps before; for as soon as the messenger comes down, I shall mount the steps and wait—yes, I shall wait at the door, close by you."

The words were scarcely uttered, when Madame Lebrenn and her children rushed to the door. She opened it. Lebrenn was really there.

It is impossible to depict the transports of the family on meeting their worshiped father.

CHAPTER XIII.

On the morning after Lebrenn's return, the anniversary of the birth of his son, who that day attained his twenty-first year, the family of the linen-draper assembled in the drawing-room.

"My child," said Lebrenn to his son, "you are to-day twenty-one years of age; the moment has come for you to open that chamber whose closed shutters have so often excited your curiosity. You shall see what it contains, and I will explain to you the end and cause of this mystery, when, I am convinced, your curiosity will be transformed into pious respect. One word more; the moment of initiating you into these family mysteries seems providentially chosen. Since yesterday, abandoned wholly as we have been to our affection, we have had little time to talk of public affairs, yet some words that have fallen from you, as well as from you, my dear George," added Lebrenn, addressing his son-in-law, "make me fear that you are discouraged, and almost despairing."

"It is only too true," answered Sacrovir.

"The sight of what is passing among us, daily, is enough to make us tremble for the future of the Republic and humanity, when we see Louis Bonaparte, the Chief Magistrate of the Republic, coolly calling upon us to pay honors to the memory of his uncle, one of the most odious despots that ever oppressed France, which he ruined, depopulated, and twice made a prey to invasion and the Bourbons," added George.

"Yes, it might be, if the progress of humanity did not unceasingly pursue its onward march, in spite of the unbelief, blindness, weakness, treachery, and crimes of men."

"What! does humanity progress unceasingly?"

"Unceasingly, my children."

"But, many centuries ago, our fathers, the Gauls, lived free and happy, yet they were despoiled and subjugated; first by the Romans, then by the Franks. Was this progress?"

"I did not say, my son, that our fathers did not suffer, but that humanity advanced. The last sons of an ancient world, which was crumbling on all sides to make way for the Christian world—an immense progress—our fathers were crushed and mutilated by the falling ruins of antiquity; but, at the same time, a great social transformation was wrought, for, I repeat to you, humanity always advances; sometimes, slowly, yet never does it take a step backward."

"I believe you, father; nevertheless—"

"You still doubt in spite of yourself. I understand this. Happily, the teachings, proofs, dates, facts, and names, which you will find in the mysterious chamber, will convince you better than my words. And when you see, my friends, that in the most fearful times of our history—almost always brought upon our country by the kings, nobles, and higher clergy—when you see that we, the conquered, began with slavery, and progressed through the ages to the sovereignty of the people, you will ask whether it would not be criminal in us to doubt the future. Doubt the future? O heaven! our fathers never doubted it, despite their martyrdom; and for this reason there was not an age in which they did not advance a step toward freedom. Alas! this step was almost always stained with blood; for, if our masters, the conquerers, showed themselves implacable, you will see that there was not an age that terrible reprisals did not break out against them, to satisfy the justice of God. Yes, you will see that there was not an age that the frieze jacket did not rebel against the golden casque—that the scythe of the husbandman did not cross the lance of the knight—that the horny hand of the vassal did not crush the soft palm of some tyrannous bishop. You will see, my children, that there was not an age that the infamous debauchery, robbery, and ferocity of the kings, and of the majority of the nobles and higher clergy, did not rouse the people to revolt, and that they did not protest by armed force against the tyranny of the throne, the nobility, and the popes. You will see that there was not an age that the famine-stricken, rising up as inexorable as hunger, did not strike the gorged with terror—not an age that had not its Belshaz-

zar's feast, buried, with its golden cups, flowers, songs, and splendor, under the avenging flood of some popular torrent. Doubtless, alas! these terrible reprisals of the oppressed were followed by ferocious vengeance; formidable examples were made; yet the insurrection, or the terror, always wrung from the eternal oppressors of our fathers some lasting concession inscribed in the law and necessarily observed. This has always been the case. You will see that there has not been a social, political, civil, or religious reform, that our fathers have not been forced to conquer, from age to age, at the price of their blood! It was thus that, by dint of valor, obstinacy, battles, and martyrdom, our fathers first broke the chains of the slavery in which the Franks had held them from the time of the Conquest, and arrived at serfhood, a condition a little less horrible. Then, from serfs they became vassals; and so on, from step to step, cutting their way, by patience and energy, through ages and obstacles, till they attained their divine right, the sovereignty of the people. And, moreover, all that constitutes the wealth of that France which our fathers had received from the hands of God, naked, barren, and uncultivated—those cultivated lands, those manufactures, those monuments, those railroads, those roads, those canals, in short, all those marvels of civilization with which France is now covered—are they not the fruit of the accumulation of the labor of our ancestors, the working classes, for so many centuries? Ah! they alone never remained idle; and while the kings and nobles of the Frankish conquest, and the higher clergy, enjoyed their idleness, we, the conquered, subjugated and despoiled Gauls, increased the incalculable wealth of the country. Yet you despair of the future because we have struggled and suffered a little for the past eighteen months! Ah! it was not for eighteen months only that our fathers struggled and suffered, but for more than eighteen centuries! But if each generation had its martyrs, it also had its conquests; and it is of these martyrs and these conquests that you are about to see the pious relics and glorious trophies. Come, my children, follow me."

With these words, Lebrenn, followed by his family, entered the chamber with closed shutters, where his son, daughter, and son-in-law found themselves for the first time.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE mysterious chamber into which Lebrenn introduced Sacrovir, Velleda, and George, for the first time, had nothing remarkable in its internal arrangements, except that it was always lighted by an antique lamp, like certain sacred sanctuaries. And was not this place the sanctuary of the pious memories, and often heroic traditions, of this plebeian family? Under the lamp, the children of the linen-draper saw a large table covered with a cloth, with a bronze coffer in its midst. Around this coffer, which was covered by the mould of years, were ranged different articles, some of which dated back to the remotest antiquity, while the most modern were the helmet of the Count de Plouernel and the iron ring which Lebrenn had brought back from the galleys at Rochefort.

"My children," said Lebrenn, in a tremulous voice, as he pointed to the historical curiosities assembled on the table, "these are our family relics. Each one of these articles is connected with some reminiscence, name, fact, or date, of interest to us; as when our descendants shall possess the narrative of my life, written by me, the helmet of M. de Plouernel, and the iron ring worn by me in the galleys, will have their historic significance. It is in this manner that almost all the generations that have gone before us, for two thousand years, have furnished their tribute to this collection."

"For so many ages!" said Sacrovir, with profound astonishment, looking at his sister and brother-in-law.

"You will know presently, my children, how these relics have come down to us. They are not very bulky, as you see; for, with the exception of M. de Plouernel's helmet and a sword of honor given to my father at the close of the last century, they might all be contained, as they have often been, in this bronze coffer—the tabernacle of our memories, often buried for long years in some desert place to await more tranquil days."

Lebrenn then took from the table the first of these relics of the past, which were ranged in chronological order. This was a golden ornament, blackened by age, in the form of a sickle; a golden ring fastened to the handle showed that it had been worn suspended from a chain or belt.

"This little golden sickle, my children," continued Lebrenn, "is a Druidical emblem; it is the most ancient memento of our family in our possession, and dates back to the year 57 B.C.—that is, nineteen hundred and six years from this time."

"And was this ornament worn by one of our ancestors?" asked Velleda.

"Yes, my child; she who wore it was as young and beautiful as you, and possessed of the most angelic heart and the noblest courage! But you will read this beautiful legend of our family in this manuscript," added Lebrenn, pointing to a little book by the side of the golden sickle. This little book, like the most ancient of those which

were seen on the table, was composed of a great number of oblong pieces of tanned skin—a sort of parchment, formerly sewed together in the form of a long, narrow band;* but, for greater convenience, they had been ripped apart and bound in a little volume covered with black leather, lettered on the side: B.C. 57.

"But, father," said Sacrovir, "I see a little book similar to this by the side of each one of the articles of which you speak."

"The reason is, that each relic bequeathed by a member of our family is accompanied with a manuscript written by him, and relating his life and often that of his kindred."

"What, father!" said Sacrovir, more and more astonished; "these manuscripts—"

"Were written by our ancestors. This surprises you, my children. You can hardly understand how an unknown family can possess its chronicle, as if it were of an ancient royal race. Then you ask how this chronicle could have been handed down from age to age without interruption from nearly two thousand years ago to our time."

"Indeed," said the young man, "it seems to me so extraordinary—"

"That it is almost improbable."

"No, father," interrupted Velleda; "not since you say that it is so; but it greatly astonishes us."

"Know first, my children, that this custom of transmitting family traditions from generation to generation, either orally or in writing, was always one of the most characteristic customs of our ancestors, the Gauls, and was even more religiously observed among the Gauls of Brittany than elsewhere. Each family, however obscure, had its traditions, while in the other countries of Europe this custom was rarely practiced, even among princes and kings. To convince you of this," added the linen-draper, taking from the table a little old book, which seemed to date back to the first age of printing, "I am about to cite you a passage translated from one of the most ancient works on Brittany, and which is an authority in the learned world."† He read as follows: "'Among the Bretons, the men of the humblest condition know their ancestors, and retain by memory their whole pedigree to the remotest generations; expressing themselves thus, for instance: Eres, the son of Theodrik, the son of Enn, the son of Aecle, the son of Cadel, the son of Roderik the Great or the chief, and so on. Their ancestors are to them the object of a true idolatry; and the insults which they punish most severely are those offered their race. Their vengeance is cruel and sanguinary, and not only do they punish fresh insults, but those of a remote date are always present to their mind until they are avenged.' You see the explanation of our family chronicle," added Lebrenn, replacing the book on the table; "and, unhappily, you will also see that some of our ancestors have been too faithful to this custom of prosecuting their revenge from generation to generation. For, more than once in the course of the ages, the Plouernels—"

"What do you say? The Plouernels!" cried George. "Were the ancestors of the Count de Plouernel ever the enemies of our race?"

"Yes, my children, as you will see. But I will not anticipate. You understand, therefore, that if our fathers handed down a feud from generation to generation, they necessarily handed down, also, the causes of this feud, as well as the most important events that transpired in each generation; and it was in this manner that our archives were written from century to century to the present time."

"You are right," said Sacrovir; "this custom explains what at first seemed so extraordinary."

"I will presently give you other details respecting the language employed in these manuscripts," resumed his father. "Let me first call your attention to these pious relics, which will be so significant to you after you have read the MSS. This golden sickle," added he, replacing it on the table, "is therefore the symbol of MS. No. 1, bearing date B.C. 57. You will see that this time was for our at that time free family an epoch of joyful prosperity, manly virtues, and lofty teachings. It was, alas! the setting of a glorious day; terrible calamities followed—slavery, tortures, and death." Then, after a moment's silence, Lebrenn resumed, "In a word, each of these MSS. will tell you, from century to century, the life of our ancestors."

For several moments, the children, as silent and deeply moved as their father, gazed with an eager glance at these relics of the past, of which we will give a sort of chronological list, as if making an inventory of the cabinet of an antiquary.

We have said that to the little GOLDEN SICKLE* was attached a MS. bearing date B.C. 57.

* The use of tanned skins for writing dates back to a very remote antiquity, and was widespread among the nations of Asia, as well as among the Greeks, Romans, and Gauls. A MS. Pentateuch, supposed to have been written prior to the ninth century, is preserved in the library at Brussels; it is written on fifty-seven skins sewed together, forming a strip about forty feet long.

† Geraldi Cambrensis Itinerari Walliœ, Londini, 1585.

* Nothing can be less improbable than the preservation for centuries of such an ornament. A gold bracelet of Gallic manufacture and of exquisite workmanship, may be seen in the Cabinet of Antiquities in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

To MS. No. 2, bearing date B.C. 56, was attached a BRASS BELL, resembling those which the people of Brittany are accustomed to hang round the necks of their cattle. This bell dated back, therefore, nineteen hundred and five years.

To MS. No. 3, bearing date A.D. 50, was attached a fragment of an IRON COLLAR, eaten with rust, on which might be discerned the vestiges of this inscription, engraved in Roman characters on the metal, "*Servus Sum*" (*I am the slave of*—). The name of the owner of the slave had doubtless been inscribed on the missing portion of the collar. This relic dated back, therefore, at least seventeen hundred and ninety-nine years.

To MS. No. 4, bearing date A.D. 290, was attached a little SILVER CROSS, fastened to a chain of the same metal, which seemed to have been blackened by fire. This little cross dated back, therefore, at least fifteen hundred and fifty-nine years.

To MS. No. 5, bearing date A.D. 393, was attached a massive copper ornament, which had belonged to the crest of a helmet, and which represented a LARK with half-spread wings. This relic dated back, therefore, at least fourteen hundred and fifty-six years.

To MS. No. 6, bearing date A.D. 497, was attached the hilt of an IRON DAGGER, covered with rust, on one side of which was written the word *gild*, and on the other these two words in the Celtic or Gallic tongue, *Amintiaich* (Friendship) and *Coumunitez* (Community). This dagger dated back, therefore, at least thirteen hundred and fifty-two years.

To MS. No. 7, bearing date A.D. 675, was attached an ABBATICAL CROSS of chased silver, which had once been gilt. Among the ornaments on this cross might have been remarked the name of Merofleda. This relic dated back, therefore, eleven hundred and seventy-four years.

To MS. No. 8, bearing date A.D. 787, were attached two small CAROLINGIAN COINS, one of copper and the other of silver, fastened together by an iron wire. These two coins dated back, therefore, at least a thousand and sixty-two years.

To MS. No. 9, bearing date A.D. 885, was attached the iron head of a BARBED ARROW. This arrow dated back, therefore, at least nine hundred and sixty-four years.

To MS. No. 10, bearing date A.D 999, was attached the SKULL of a child eight or ten years of age, judging by its structure and size; on the bones of the skull were engraved these words in Gallic, *Fin-al-bed* (the end of the world). This relic dated back, therefore, at least eight hundred and fifty years.

To MS. No. 11, bearing date A.D. 1010, was attached a WHITE SHELL, such as were seen on the mantles of the pilgrims. This shell dated back at least eight hundred and thirty-nine years.

To MS. No. 12, bearing date A.D. 1137, was attached a gold PASTORAL RING, such as was worn by the bishops, upon which was engraved the arms of the Plouernels (three eagle's talons sable on a field gules). This ring dated back at least seven hundred and twelve years.

To MS. No. 13, bearing date A.D. 1208, was attached a pair of IRON PINCERS, an instrument of torture, cut like a saw in such a manner that the teeth fitted into each other. This instrument dated back at least six hundred and forty-one years.

To MS. No. 14, bearing date A.D. 1358, were attached two articles—first, a small IRON TRIPOD, six inches in diameter and partly reddened by fire; and secondly, the handle of a DIRK, richly inlaid and ornamented with the arms of the Counts of Plouernel. This iron tripod and dirk-handle dated back, therefore, at least four hundred and ninety-one years.

To MS. No. 15, bearing date A.D. 1413, was attached a BUTCHER'S KNIFE, with a horn handle and a broken blade. This knife dated back, therefore, at least four hundred and thirty-six years.

To MS. No. 16, bearing date A.D. 1515, was attached a small POCKET BIBLE, belonging to the earliest days of printing; the cover of this book had been almost entirely burned as well as the corners of the leaves, as though the bible had been for some time exposed to the fire; several of its pages were also stained with blood. This bible dated back, therefore, at least three hundred and thirty-four years.

To MS. No. 17, bearing date A.D. 1648, was attached the iron head of a heavy BLACKSMITH'S HAMMER, upon which were seen engraved the Breton words *Ez-Lirr* (be free). This hammer dated back, therefore, at least two hundred and one years.

To MS. No. 18, bearing date A.D. 1794, was attached a SWORD OF HONOR, with a brass-gilt hilt; on either side of the blade was engraved the inscription: *The French Republic. Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Jean Lebrenn has deserved well of his country.*

Lastly were seen, unaccompanied with MS., and simply bearing date 1848 and 1849, the last two articles composing the collection, namely, the DRAGOON'S HELMET, given to Lebrenn by the Count de Plouernel, and the IRON RING which the linen-draper had worn in the Rochefort galleys.

It will easily be understood with what pious respect and ardent curiosity these relics of the past were examined by the family of the linen-draper. He broke the thoughtful silence of the examination, and resumed:

"Thus you see, my children, that these MSS. relate the history of our plebeian family for nearly two thousand years; this history may be styled the history of the people, their vicissitudes, customs, manners, sufferings, faults, excesses, and sometimes even crimes; for slavery, ignorance and want often deprave men while degrading them. But, thank God, the evil deeds of our family have been few, while the trials of patriotism and heroism of our ancestors, both male and female, have been numerous during the long struggle against the Romans and Franks. Yes, both male and female, for you will see women, in many pages of these narratives, rivaling their brothers in courage and devotion, like true daughters of Gaul, and many of these touching or heroic female figures will remain cherished and glorified in your memory as the saints of our family legends. One word more concerning the language employed in these MSS. You know, my children, that your mother and I placed you from your earliest infancy under the care of a nurse from our own provinces, that you might learn the Breton at the same time with the French, and that we have always kept you in the habit of using this tongue by frequently conversing in it with you."

"Yes."

"Well, my child, in teaching you the Breton language, my chief motive was to follow the custom of our family, which has never abandoned its mother tongue, and to enable you to read these MSS."

"Are they written in the Breton language, then?" asked Velleda.

"Yes, my children, for the Breton tongue is no other than the Celtic or Gallic language, which was spoken throughout Gaul before the Roman and Frankish conquests. Save a few alterations caused by the lapse of centuries, it has been preserved in almost all its purity, in Brittany, to this day; for, of all the Gallic provinces, Brittany was the last that submitted to the Frankish kings, sprung from the Conquest. Let us never forget the proud and heroic motto of our fathers, when finally despoiled and subjugated by strangers,* 'Our name, our tongue and our faith remain to us!' Now, my children, during two thousand years of conflicts and trials, our family has preserved its name, its tongue, and its faith; for we are called Lebrenn, we speak Gallic, and I have brought you up in the faith of our fathers—that faith in the immortality of the soul and the continuity of life which makes us look on death as nothing more than a change of habitation—a sublime faith whose morality, as taught by the Druids, may be summed up in such precepts as these: Adore God; do no evil; practice generosity; he is pure and holy who doeth pure and heavenly works. Let us preserve, therefore, like our ancestors, our name, our tongue and our faith."

"This pledge shall never be broken by us, dear father," answered Velleda.

"We will show neither less courage nor less firmness than our ancestors," added Sacrovir. "Ah! with what emotion shall I read these venerated characters traced by their hand. But are the written characters of this Celtic or Gallic language just the same as those of the Breton, which we are accustomed to read?"

"No; the Gallic written characters, which were at first the same as those of the Greeks,* became modified by time, and for several centuries past have fallen into disuse; but my grandfather, a journeyman printer, as obscure as erudite and lettered, translated all the MSS. written in Gallic into modern Breton. Thanks to this labor, you can therefore read these MSS. as fluently as those favorite legends of our honest Gildas, which, composed eight or nine hundred years ago, are still in circulation in our Breton villages, printed on brown paper."

"One more question, father," said Sacrovir. "Has our family constantly dwelt in Brittany during so many ages?"

"No, not always, as you will see from these narratives. Conquest, wars, and the varied and rude vicissitudes to which a family like ours was subjected in those times, often forced our fathers to quit their native country, sometimes dragged as slaves or prisoners to other provinces, sometimes to escape death, to gain their bread, in obedience to strange laws, or in consequence of the chances of fate; but there were very few of our ancestors who did not make a sort of pious pilgrimage, which I have made myself, and which you will make on the first of January succeeding your majority—that is, the first of next January."

"Why on that day in particular?"

"Because the first day of the new year has always been a solemn festival in Gaul."

"And what is this pilgrimage?"

"It is to the Druidical stones of Karnak, near Auray."

"I have heard, indeed, that these gigantic blocks of granite, arranged in a myste-

* One of the most illustrious historians of our times, whose authority cannot be disputed, Amédée Thierry, says in his introduction to the History of the Gauls, "The remains of the original language are still found at the present time, in certain districts of France and England. France possesses two of these—the Basque, which is spoken in the Eastern Pyrenees, and the Low Breton, or Armorican Gallic, which was formerly more widespread, but which is now confined to the extremity of Brittany; England one, the Welch, spoken in the country of Wales."

* The Gauls employed the same characters or letters as the Greeks. Tacitus speaks of several Gallic inscriptions found on the frontiers of Germania, and remarks that they were written in Greek characters.

rious fashion, which are still to be seen in our day, date back to a very remote antiquity."

"More than two thousand years ago, my child, it was already unknown at what distant epoch, lost in the night of ages, the stones of Karnak had been thus arranged."

"O father! I grow giddy in trying to fancy what the age of these stones must be."

"God only knows, my child; and if we judge of their future by their past duration, thousands of succeeding generations will still gaze on these gigantic monuments, which defy the ages, and on which the eyes of our fathers have so often rested from century to century in pious meditation."

"And why did they make this pilgrimage?"

"Because the cradle of our family—the fields and dwelling of the first of our ancestors of which these MSS. make mention—was situated near the stones; for, as you will see, this ancestor, named Joel, the brenn or chief of the tribe of Karnak,* was the chief or patriarch, elected by his tribe or clan."

"So that our name — brenn — signifies chief?"

"Yes, this honorary appellation, joined to the individual name of each one—or the baptismal name, as it is called since the introduction of Christianity — has become transformed, in the course of time, into a family name; for the use of family names did not become general among the people until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the early ages, the sons of our ancestors, for instance, were called Guilhern, the son of the brenn; Kirio, the grandson of the brenn. But, in the course of time, the words grandson and great-grandson were suppressed, and nothing but the baptismal name was prefixed to the word brenn, which was corrupted to Lebrenn. In the same manner, almost all the names borrowed from a trade—such as Carpenter, Mason, Baker, Weaver, and Miller—originated in a manual art, the designation of which became transformed in time into a family name.* These explanations may, perhaps, seem puerile to you, yet they call your attention to a significant and mournful fact—the absence of family names among our brethren of the people. Alas! so long as they were slaves or serfs, what need had they of names—they who did not belong to themselves? Their master gave them strange and grotesque names, as he would have given fancy names to a horse or dog; then the slave, on being sold to another master, was furnished with another name. But you will see that, in proportion as these oppressed beings attained to a less servile condition, thanks to their bold and unceasing struggles, the consciousness of their dignity as men developed more and more; and when they were finally able to have an obscure but honorable name of their own, and to transmit it to their children, though still very unhappy, they were no longer either slaves or serfs. The conquest of a name of their own—a family name—with the duties imposed and the rights bestowed by it, was one of the greatest steps of our ancestors toward complete enfranchisement. One word more respecting the MSS. you are about to read. You will find therein a sentiment of the Gallic nationality and its religious faith that is worthy of admiration; a sentiment the more indomitable and exaggerated, perhaps, in proportion as the Roman and Frankish conquests weighed heavily on these heroic men and women, so proud of their race, and carrying their contempt of death to superhuman greatness. Let us admire and imitate their ardent patriotism, their implacable hatred of oppression, and their belief in the perpetuity of life, which delivered them from the fear of death. But, while piously extolling the past, let us continue, according to the progress of humanity, to march forward toward the future. Let us not forget that a new world commenced with Christianity. Doubtless, its divine spirit of brotherly love, equality, and liberty was outrageously denied, trodden under foot, and persecuted in the early ages by many of the higher Church dignitaries, the owners of slaves and serfs, and gorged with the riches cozened from the Frankish conquerors in return for the absolution of their abominable crimes. Doubtless, our enslaved fathers, seeing the word of the Gospel stifled and powerless to free them, relied on themselves for support, and took up arms against the tyranny of the conquerors; and almost always, as you will see proved, where the sermon had

* To demonstrate the probability of our fiction, we make the following extract from Gregory de Rostrenen, who wrote in the middle of the last century: "The most ancient relic which I have found of the Gallic or Breton language is a MS. book in the Breton tongue, containing the predictions of Guin-Clan, a Breton astronomer, celebrated even to this day among the Bretons; he prefaces his predictions by stating that he writes in the year 240 of the Christian era, living between Roch Hellas and Potz-guen—that is, between Morlaix and Tréguier. Now, we ask whether, if it is known to-day that Guin-Clan lived in the year 240—that is, more than sixteen hundred years ago—between Morlaix and Tréguier, there is anything improbable in supposing that the descendants of the Lebrenn family might not have known that their ancestor lived about two thousand years ago near the stones of Karnak, which are still standing in our day precisely as they did at that time.

* Personages with no other names than surnames—sometimes grotesque, terrible, or touching—borrowed either from their condition or from some act of their life, peculiarity, or moral or physical deformity, will be seen in the course of this story.

failed, the insurrection obtained lasting concessions, in accordance with the wise axiom of all times, 'Help yourself, and Providence will help you.' But at last, in spite of the Apostolic Roman Church, the spirit of Christianity spread over the world, imbuing it with that soft and tender warmth which the Druidical faith of our fathers lacked in its sublimity, and which, so to speak, rejuvenated and completed this faith. Doubtless, also, it was painful to us conquered ones to lose even the name of our nationality, and to see the name of France imposed by a horde of ferocious conquerors on ancient and illustrious Gaul. It is a remarkable fact, that at the time of the Revolution of '89, the reaction against the Conquest and the kings by divine right was so thoroughly national, that citizens execrated even the French name, thinking it absurd and wrong (and they were, in a certain sense, as logical as patriotic) to preserve this name on obtaining the victory, after a struggle of fourteen centuries' duration, over the foreign kings and race that had inflicted it upon us as the stigma of their conquest."

"That reminds me of my poor grandfather," said George, smiling; "he said that he was no longer proud of being a Frenchman since he knew it to be the name of the Cossack barbarians who had robbed and crushed us."

"I understand perfectly why we should claim the old and illustrious name of Gaul for our country," observed Sacrovir.

"Indeed," returned Lebrenn, "the Gallic Republic would sound as well to my ear as the French Republic; but, in the first place, it seems to me that our first immortal republic has sufficiently purified the French name from its monarchical stain in the eyes of Europe; then Gaul is like those illustrious women who render themselves famous under their husbands' names."

"Nothing can be juster than this comparison," said Madame Lebrenn. "Our name may have changed, but our race remains the same."

"Now," resumed Lebrenn with emotion, "you are initiated into the traditions of the foundation of our plebeian archives; do you solemnly pledge yourselves to continue them, and to bind your children to do the same? Do you, my son, and you, my daughter, in default of him, pledge yourself to write with sincerity your deeds and acts, just or unjust, praiseworthy or criminal, so that when you quit this existence for another, the story of your life may swell the family chronicle, and the inexorable justice of our posterity esteem or contemn your memory as it deserves?"

"Yes, father, we swear this."

"Well, Sacrovir, since you have to-day completed your one-and-twentieth year, you are at liberty, according to our traditions, to read these MSS. We will read them aloud every evening till they are finished; and that George may understand them, we will translate them into French."

The same evening, the family being gathered round the center-table, Sacrovir commenced the reading of the first MS., entitled THE GOLDEN SICKLE.

THE

MYSTERIES OF THE PEOPLE;

OR,

The Story of a Plebeian Family for Two Thousand Years.

THE GOLDEN SICKLE; OR, THE VIRGIN OF THE ISLE OF SENA. B.C. 57.

CHAPTER I.

The Gauls nineteen hundred years ago.—Joel, the husbandman, brenn of the tribe of Karnak.—Guilhern, the son of Joel.—The encounter with a traveler.—Strange fashion of offering hospitality.—Joel, as loquacious as the traveler is reticent, talks complacently of his famous stallion, Tom Bras, and his renowned war-dog, Deber Trud, the man-eater.—His confidence not rendering the traveler more communicative, the good Joel tells, not less complacently, of his three sons, Guilhern, the husbandman. Mikael, the armorer, and Albinik, the sailor, as well as of his daughter, Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sena.—The name of Hena loosens the traveler's tongue.—They arrive at the house of Joel.

He who writes this is named Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak; he is the son of Marik, who was the son of Kirio, who was the son of Tiras, who was the son of Gomez, who was the son of Vorr, who was the son of Glenan, who was the son of Erer, who was the son of Roderik, who was chosen as the brenn of the Gallic army which subjected Rome to ransom two hundred and seventy-seven years ago.

Joel feared the gods, his heart was upright, his courage firm, and his spirit joyous; he liked to laugh, to tell stories, and, above all, to listen to those of others.

In the time of Cæsar, whose name be accursed, Joel lived two leagues from Auray, not far from the sea and the island of Roswallan, close by the skirts of the forest of Karnak, the most celebrated forest of Breton Gaul.

One evening, the evening preceding the anniversary of the day on which his beloved daughter Hena had been born to him, eighteen years before, Joel and his eldest son, Guilhern, were returning homeward at nightfall, in a wagon drawn by four handsome Breton oxen, with horns shorter than their ears. Joel and his son had just been spreading marl over their lands, as it was the custom to do in autumn, to prepare them for the spring crops. The wagon toiled up the steep cliffs of Craigh to a spot where the mountainous road is closely shut in by great rocks, and from which the ocean could be seen in the distance, and still farther the mysterious and sacred Isle of Sena.

"Father," said Guilhern to Joel, "see that man yonder on the top of the cliff. In spite of the steepness of the descent, he is putting his horse to the gallop."

"The man will break his neck as sure as the plow was invented by the good Elldud."*

"Where can he be going, father? The sun is setting, the wind blows hard, the weather is stormy, and this road leads only to the lonely strand."

"My son, this man is not a native of Breton Gaul; he wears a fur cap and a goat-skin coat, with the hair outward; and his legs are cased in tanned skin, fastened with red bands. He has a short axe at his right side, and at his left a long knife in a sheath. His great black horse does not stumble in the descent. But where can he be going?"

"Father, this man has doubtless lost his way."

"Oh, my son, may Teutates hear you!† We will offer hospitality to this horseman, whose dress announces that he is a stranger. What fine stories he will tell us about his country and travels!"

"The divine Ogmi,‡ whose speech binds men with chains of gold, be auspicious to us, father! It is long since a stranger story-teller has been seated at our fireside."

"And we have no news of what is taking place in the rest of Gaul?"

"Unfortunately, no."

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* "Elldud, the holy man of Cor-Dewdws, improved agriculture, taught the Gauls a better method of cultivating the soil than had before been known, and showed them how to manure with marl, and to use the plow. Before his time, the land was tilled with the pick and the hoe alone."—JEAN REYNAUD.

† "Teutates was the demi-god or saint who, in our fathers' eyes, held in his hands the destiny of souls; it was he who presided over all journeys, not only through this world, but through all the circles of the universe, the director, as Cæsar calls him, of roads and travelers."—JEAN REYNAUD.

‡ One of the most characteristic features of that genius for story-telling, and, above all, of that love of listening to stories, so peculiar to the Gauls, was the demi-god, Ogmi. "This demi-god, who symbolized the power of speech, the attributes of which are described by Lucan," says Reynaud, "was represented under the figure of Old Age, as if to denote that, in default of the powers of the body, he possessed those of tradition and experience. Though he was invested with the lion's skin and club of Hercules, it was not by force that he retained his captives, who, bound with chains of gold and amber, extending from the ears to the mouth, far from resisting him, followed him eagerly like those wild beasts formerly made captives by the lyre of Orpheus."

"Ah! my son, if I were all-powerful, like Hesus,* I would have a new story-teller every night at my supper-table."

"And I would send men everywhere to travel, that they might return and tell me their adventures."

"And if I had Hesus's power, what surprising adventures would I send my travelers to redouble the interest of their stories on their return."

"Father, father, here is the horseman close by us!"

"Yes, he has checked his horse, for the road is narrow; we will block up the way with our wagon. Come, Guilhern, the moment is propitious; the traveler must have lost his way; we will offer him hospitality for the night, and will keep him to-morrow, and perhaps several days longer. We shall have done a good deed, and he will give us news of Gaul and the other countries in which he has traveled."

"And it will likewise give my sister Hena great pleasure, when she comes to-morrow, to spend her birthday with us."

"O Guilhern! I had not thought of the pleasure which my dear daughter will take in listening to the stranger. He must be our guest."

"He shall be, father, he shall be," returned Guilhern, with a determined air.

Joel and his son alighted from the wagon, and advanced toward the stranger. On seeing him near by, both were struck with his majestic features. Nothing could be imagined prouder than his eye, more manly than his figure, or nobler than his bearing. On his forehead and his left cheek he bore the scars of two freshly-healed wounds. By his martial air, he might have been taken for one of the chiefs chosen by the tribes to command them in times of war. Joel and his son were more than ever desirous that he should accept their hospitality.

"Friend traveler," said Joel, "night is approaching, and you have lost your way. This road leads only to a lonely strand, which will soon be covered by the rising tide, for the wind is blowing hard. To pursue your way on such a night would be perilous; come to my house, therefore, and to-morrow you shall continue your journey."

"I have not lost my way; I know where I am going, and I am in haste. Turn your oxen aside and make room for me to pass," rudely answered the horseman, his brow bathed with perspiration from the rapidity of his descent. By his accent, he appeared to belong to Central Gaul, in the neighborhood of the Loire. Having thus answered Joel, he struck his heel twice against the flanks of his great black horse in order to approach nearer to the oxen, which, having turned a little on one side, completely blocked up the path.

"Friend traveler, did you not hear me?" said Joel. "I told you that this road led nowhere but to the shore, that night was approaching, and that I offered you the shelter of my house."

"I do not need your hospitality," shouted the stranger, beginning to grow angry. "Drive your oxen out of the way; you see that I cannot pass on either side because of the rocks. Out of my way quickly—I am in haste."

"Friend," said Joel, "you are a stranger; I am a native of this country. It is my duty to prevent you from losing your way; I shall do my duty."

"By Ritha Gawr! who made himself a sagum* of the kings' beards that he had shaven,"† cried the stranger, waxing more and more furious. "Since my beard has been grown, I have traveled much, and seen many countries, men and wonderful things, but never have I met two such madmen as these."

Joel and his son, who passionately loved to listen to stories, on learning from the stranger himself that he had seen many countries, men and wonderful things, concluded thence that he must have many charming tales to relate, and felt a still more violent desire to have such a story-teller as their guest. Instead of stirring his wagon, therefore, Joel approached close to the traveler, and said to him in his gentlest voice, albeit it was naturally harsh, "Friend, you shall go no farther. I will render myself pleasing to the gods, and above all to Teutates, by preventing you from losing your way, and making you pass a comfortable night under a dry roof, instead of letting you wander on the shore and run the risk of being drowned by the tide."

"Take care!" returned the stranger, raising his hand to the axe suspended by his side. "Take care! If you do not instantly turn your oxen aside, I will make a sacrifice to the gods, and add you to the offering!"

"The gods cannot but protect such a fervent worshiper," returned Joel, smiling, after exchanging a few words with his son, "wherefore they will not suffer you to pass the night on the shore, as you will see."

With these words, Joel and his son, precipitating themselves suddenly on the traveler, took him each by one leg, and, both being extremely tall and robust, raised

* Hesus, like the Jehovah of the Hebrews and the Jupiter of the Pagans, was the supreme god of the Gauls. The name Hesus signifies, I am that I am.

* The sagum of the Gauls is the blouse of our times.

† Ritha Gawr, a Gallic demi-god or saint, according to tradition, made himself a sagum, say the Triads, from the beards of the kings whom he had shaven, or reduced to slavery, on account of their oppression and contempt for justice.

him straight up in the air above the saddle of his horse, shoving the latter forward so that they had only to set the traveler on his feet, which they did with great respect. The stranger, whose fury was at its height, endeavored to resist and to draw his knife, whereupon Joel and Guilhern held him fast, took a stout rope from their wagon, tied his hands and feet firmly, but with great gentleness and kindness, and, having thus rendered him powerless to stir, despite his frantic efforts, placed him in the bottom of the wagon, still with great respect and gentleness, for the manly dignity of his face impressed them more and more.*

Guilhern then mounted the horse of the traveler, and followed the wagon, which Joel drove, quickening the pace of the oxen with his goad, for the wind blew louder and louder, and the sea was heard dashing noisily against the rocks of the coast; flashes of lightning darted through the black clouds; everything, in short, foretold a stormy night.

Yet, in spite of this threatening night, the stranger did not seem grateful for the hospitality which Joel and his son hastened to offer him. He lay in the bottom of the wagon white with rage, sometimes gnashing his teeth, and sometimes panting as if in a fever; but he kept his anger within himself, and did not speak a word. Joel, it must be confessed, was very fond of hearing others talk, but he was also very fond of talking himself; wherefore, he said to the stranger:

"My guest—for such you are now, and I thank Teutates, the god of travelers, for having sent me a guest—it is necessary that you should know who I am; yes, I ought to tell you who I am, since you are about to be seated at my hearth." And, although the traveler made an angry gesture, which seemed to signify that he was indifferent to the history of Joel, the latter nevertheless continued: "My name is Joel; I am the son of Marik, who was the son of Kirio. Kirio was the son of Tiras; Tiras was the son of Gomez; Gomez was the son of Vorr; Vorr was the son of Glenan, and Glenan was the son of Erer, who was the son of Roderik, who was chosen as the brenn† of the confederated Gallic army which forced Rome to pay a ransom in punishment for its treachery, two hundred and seventy-seven years ago. I have been chosen the brenn of my tribe, which is the tribe of Karnak. We are husbandmen, from father to son; we cultivate our fields to the best of our ability, after the example given by Coll* to our ancestors. We sow more wheat and barley than rye and oats."

The stranger appeared more irritated than interested by these details; nevertheless, Joel went on: "Thirty-two years ago, I married Margarid, the daughter of Dorlenn, by whom I have had a daughter and three sons; the eldest—who is there behind us, riding your good black horse, friend guest—the eldest is named Guilhern; he assists me in cultivating my fields, together with several of my kindred. I raise great numbers of black sheep, which feed in our heaths, together with multitudes of wild hogs, as fierce as wolves,† and which never sleep beneath a roof. We have some fine meadows in the valley of Auray. I likewise raise horses, from my fine stallion, Tom Bras. My son Guilhern amuses himself, for his part, in raising dogs for hunting and for war; the hunting-dogs from a limehound named Tyntaminar, the war-dogs‡ from my great dog, Deber Trud, the man-eater. Our horses and dogs are so renowned that men come to buy them from twenty leagues round. You see, my guest, that you might have fallen into worse hands."

The stranger heaved a deep sigh of stifled anger, gnawed his long, light moustache, and raised his eyes to heaven. Joel continued, goading his oxen:

"Mikael, my second son, is an armorer, four leagues from here, at Auray. He not only makes weapons of war, but also plowshares, large Gallic scythes,‖ and axes, which are greatly esteemed, for he brings his iron from the mountains of Ares. And that is not all, friend traveler, that is not all; Mikael makes other things besides. Before settling at Auray, he went to Bourges, to work with one of our relatives, a descendant of the inventor of the art of plating tin on iron and copper,§ in which the workmen of Bourges now

* "Among the Gauls," says Cæsar, "the passion for story-telling is so great, that traders coming from a distance find themselves assailed with questions by the crowd. Sometimes travelers are even stopped by force on the roads, and obliged to satisfy the curiosity of the passers-by."

† The Roman historians mistook the title of the leader of the Gallic armies for his name, and transformed brenn into Brennus.

* Coll, the son of Coll-Fewr, another Gallic saint. He first introduced wheat and barley.

† "In spite of the extension of agriculture," says Strabo, "the raising of cattle is one of the principal occupations of the Gauls. They raise innumerable herds of half-savage swine, which are driven to the forests, and which are as dangerous to encounter as wolves."

‡ "In times of war," says Strabo, "the Gauls used dogs to track and pursue the enemy. These ferocious dogs, which were equally well adapted to battle and to the hunting of wild beasts, came from Brittany and the Ardennes: they fought for their masters round the chariots of war."

‖ The Gauls invented the scythe. Before this innovation, the reaping was done wholly with the sickle; as before the Gallic invention of the plow, the earth was tilled with the hoe.

§ Pliny says that the Gauls of Bourges plated melted tin on copper with such skill that it could not be distinguished from silver. Vases, bits, harness, and whole chariots were thus ornamented.

excel. My son Mikael returned worthy of his masters. Ah! you should see the horses' bits, the ornaments for chariots, and the superb helmets that Mikael makes; you would think that they were silver! He has just finished a helmet, with a crest, representing an elk's head with its horns—the most magnificent and terrible thing you ever saw!"

"Ah!" murmured the stranger, between his teeth, "men are right in saying that the sword of a Gaul kills but once, while his tongue murders you without ceasing."

"Friend guest," returned Joel, "till now I have had no praise to give your tongue, which has been as mute as a fish; but I will await your leisure, to hear from you, in turn, who you are, whence you come, where you are going, what wonderful men you have met in your travels, and what is now taking place in the other countries of Gaul, which you have doubtless just passed through. Meanwhile, I will finish telling you about myself and my family."

At this threat, the stranger gave an impatient jerk, as if wishing to break his bands; but in vain—the rope was strong, and Joel and his son had tied the knots securely.

"I have not yet spoken of my third son, Albinik, the sailor," continued Joel; "he trades with the Island of Great Britain, as well as with all the coast of Gaul, and even goes as far as Spain, to carry thither Gascon wines and Aquitanian salt meat. Unfortunately he went to sea some time since, with his charming wife, Meroë; wherefore you will not see them at my house this evening. I told you that, besides my three sons, I have a daughter; and she, do you see," exclaimed Joel, in a proud and softened voice, "is the pearl of the family! I am not the only one that says so; my wife, my sons, my kindred, and all my tribe agree with me; all join in singing the praises of Hena, the daughter of Joel—of Hena, one of the nine virgins of the Isle of Sena."

"What do you say?" cried the stranger, suddenly sitting upright—the only movement that he could make, seeing that his legs were tied and his hands bound behind his back—"What do you say? Is your daughter one of the nine virgins of the Isle of Sena?"*

"This seems to surprise you greatly, and to soothe you a little, friend guest."

"Your daughter," repeated the stranger, as if unable to believe what he heard; "your daughter one of the nine virgins of the Isle of Sena?"

"As truly as that it will be eighteen years to-morrow since she was born; for we are preparing to keep her birthday, and you will be of the party. The guest at our hearth is one of our family. You will see my daughter; she is the loveliest, gentlest, and most learned of her companions, meaning no ill of any of them."

"Come," rejoined the stranger, less roughly, "I forgive the violence you have done me."

"Hospitable violence, my friend."

"Hospitable or not, you have prevented me by force from repairing to the Bay of Erer, where a boat will wait till sunset to take me to the Isle of Sena."

At these words, Joel burst out laughing.

"What are you laughing at?" asked the stranger.

"If you should tell me that a boat with a dog's head, bird's wings, and fish's tail was waiting to take you to the Isle of Sena, I should laugh at your words all the same."

"I do not understand you."

"You are my guest; I will not insult you by telling you that you lie. But I can say, 'Friend, you are in jest when you talk of the boat that is to take you to the Isle of Sena. Never has man—the Arch Druid excepted—set foot on the Isle of Sena, and never will man set foot thereon.'"

"And how do you manage when you go to see your daughter?"

"I do not land on the island; I stop at the Isle of Kellor and wait for my daughter, who comes there to meet me."

"Friend Joel," said the traveler, "you wished me to be your guest; I am such, and as such I ask you to do me a service. Take me to-morrow in your boat to the Isle of Kellor."

"You are not aware, then, that the ewaghs watch there night and day?"

"I know it; one of them was to meet me this evening at the Bay of Erer to take me to Taliessin, the Arch Druid, who is now at the Isle of Sena with his wife, Auria."*

* The Isle of Sena, now called Sein. There was, formerly, a renowned College of Druidesses on this island: some of them remained virgins, and others married and participated in family life.

* The word *Druid* is derived from the Gallic words *derw* (oak), *wyd* (mistletoe), and *dyn* (man)—that is, the man of the mistletoe-oak—*derw-wyd-dyn*—which was corrupted to Druid. The oak was the symbol of divinity in the eyes of the Druids; their only temples were the forests of oaks of centuries' growth, where they invoked and glorified Hesus, the supreme god. The mistletoe—a plant differing in nature from the oak, and drawing its nourishment therefrom—was to them the image of man, living by and from God, although differing from him in nature. "The oak," says Pliny, "is the admiration of Gaul; it is the most sacred thing in the country." The antiquity and sublimity of the Druidical religion is proved by numerous passages from the ancient authors. Aristotle says that, thanks to the Druids, Gaul was the instructress of Greece. Polystorus—one of the greatest authorities of the ancients with respect to the knowledge of past epochs, says that Pythagoras traveled among the Druids and borrowed from them the principles of philosophy. Pythagoras proclaims the Druids the most elevated in spirit of all mankind. St. Cyril of Alexandria, in his thesis against the Emperor Julian, maintaining that the belief in the unity of God had existed among foreign nations before spreading among the Greeks, alleges the example of the Druids, whom he puts

"It is the truth," replied Joel, greatly surprised. "The last time that my daughter was home, she told me that the aged Taliessin had been on the island ever since the beginning of the year, and that Taliessin's wife had shown her the kindness of a mother."

"You see that you can believe me, friend Joel. Take me to-morrow to the Isle of Kellor, where I wish to speak to one of the ewaghs."

"I consent; I will take you to the Isle of Kellor."

"Now you can rid me of my bonds. I swear by Hesus that I will not seek to escape your hospitality."

"So be it," said Joel, untying the knots. "I trust to the promise of my guest."

By this time, night had fallen; but, in spite of the darkness and roughness of the road, the oxen, sure of their path, went straight toward the house of Joel. His son Guilhern, who, still mounted on the traveler's horse, had followed the wagon, took a cow's horn, pierced at both ends, and, making use of it as a trumpet, blew three times. The loud barking of dogs soon answered the call.

"Here we are at home," said Joel to the stranger. "You must have suspected as much from the barking of the dogs. Listen! that deep voice which is heard above all the rest belongs to my old Deber Trud, the father of all the fierce war-dogs which you will see to-morrow. My son Guilhern will lead your horse to the stable; he will find there a good supply of fresh litter and old barley."

At the sound of Guilhern's horn, one of his kinsmen came from the house with a pine torch in his hand. Joel, guided by this light, turned his oxen, and the wagon entered the courtyard.

CHAPTER II.

The house of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak.—A Gallic family.—Hospitality, costumes, arms, manners, and customs.—The Girdle of Agility:—The chest of skulls.—Armel and Julyan, the two Saldunes.—Eagerness of Joel to hear the stories of the traveler, who delays satisfying his curiosity.—The repast.—How a supper often ended among the Gauls, to the great delight of the mothers, young girls and children.

THE house of Joel, like all the rural habitations of the Gauls,* was very spacious. It was circular in form and was built by means of two rows of stakes, filled in with well-pounded clay mixed with chopped straw; this thick wall was then covered over, inside and out, with a coating of fine greasy earth, which, when dry, became as hard as sandstone; the roof, which was broad and projecting, was made of oaken rafters, joined together, and covered with a layer of sea-weed, so thick that it was impossible for the water to penetrate it. On each side of the house extended the outbuildings designed for the granaries, stables, sheep-folds, sheds, cellar, and laundry. These different buildings formed a vast square, inclosing a large court, which was closed at night by a massive door; outside, a strong palisade, with a deep ditch in front, surrounded the building, leaving space between for a sort of circular walk, about four cubits broad, where two great, ferocious war-dogs were let loose during the night. This palisade had an outer door, corresponding to the inner door of the court; both were closed at nightfall.

The number of men, women and children, all more or less nearly related to Joel, who assisted him in cultivating the fields, was considerable. They lodged in the buildings adjoining the main house, assembling at the latter at mid-day and evening to take their meals in common. Other habitations, similarly built, and occupied by numerous families, who cultivated their lands, were scattered here and there through the country, and composed the tribe of Karnak, of which Joel was the chief.

On entering the courtyard of his house, Joel was welcomed by the caresses of his old war-dog, Deber Trud, of an iron-gray color, marked with black, with an enormous head and ferocious eyes, and so high in stature that he put his fore-paws on his master's shoulder when caressing him—a dog so brave that he had once fought a monstrous bear from the Ares Mountains and strangled him. As to his warlike qualities, Deber Trud would have been worthy to figure in the pack of Bithert, the Gallic chief, who said, contemptuously, at the sight of a troop of the enemy, "They would not make a meal for my dogs."

Deber Trud having at first eyed and scented the stranger with a dubious air, Joel said, "Do you not see that it is a guest

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on a level with the disciples of Zoroaster and Brahma. Celsus, surnamed Origenus, calls the Galactophages of Homer and the Druids of Gaul the primordial and wisest of nations. These testimonials superabundantly prove the grandeur and dignity of the religion of our fathers.

In principle, nothing separated the Druidical body from the rest of the nation; they were not a caste and sacerdotal body, like the Catholic clergy, for instance. The interests of the Druids were the same as those of their brethren; they were simply trained to science and literature, and possessed full liberty to marry, and to participate in public and private affairs. They had charge of public instruction, public morals, the civil and criminal courts, and diplomatic affairs. The Druidical body was divided into the Druids proper, whose duty it was to superintend public affairs, the ewaghs or vates, who had charge of religious worship, and who also practiced medicine, and the bards who sung the glory of the heroes of Gaul and the praises of the gods and branded evil deeds with their satire. The wandering minstrels that are still seen in Brittany are the descendants of these ancient bards.

* This description of a Gallic house is faithfully copied from the ancient writers.

whom I have brought?" whereupon, as if he had understood his master, the dog troubled himself no more about the stranger, but, frisking clumsily, preceded them to the house. This house was divided into three rooms of unequal size; the two smaller, shut off from the main apartment by oaken partitions, were designed, one for Joel and his wife, the other for their daughter Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sena, when she visited her family. The great central hall served for the meals and the evening occupations.

When the stranger entered this hall, a great fire of oak logs, fed with heath and sea-weed, was blazing on the hearth, and almost rendered useless the light of a beautiful plated-copper lamp, suspended by three chains of the same metal, as bright as silver. This lamp was a present from Mikael, the armorer. Two whole sheep were roasting on long iron spits before the fire, while salmon and other sea-fish were boiling in a large copper kettle with water, vinegar, salt, and cummin.

On the wainscoting were nailed the heads of wolves, boars, and stags, and a kind of wild bull called the urus, which was beginning to be very rare in the country. Weapons of the chase were also seen, such as arrows, bows, and slings; and warlike weapons, such as spears, darts, axes, copper swords, wooden bucklers covered with the tough skin of the seal, and lances, with a broad and sharp barbed head, ornamented with a brass bell, for the purpose of announcing to the enemies from afar the coming of the Gallic warriors; for the latter despised ambuscades, and liked to fight hand-to-hand in an open field. Nets for fishing, and harpoons for spearing the salmon on the flats after the tide had ebbed, were also seen suspended here and there.

On the right of the entrance-door was a sort of altar, composed of a block of gray granite, surmounted and shadowed by large oak-boughs, freshly cut. Upon the stone was placed a small copper basin, filled with water, in which were seven twigs of mistletoe, and on the wall was the inscription, "Plenty and paradise are in store for the just man and pure. He is pure and holy who does pure and heavenly works."

As soon as Joel entered the house, he approached the copper basin with the seven twigs of mistletoe, and respectfully touched each of them with his lips. His guest followed his example, and both approached the hearth, where Mamm'* Margarid, the wife of Joel, sat with her distaff in her hand. She was remarkably tall of stature, and was dressed in a short brown woolen tunic without sleeves, over her long, close-sleeved gray dress. Both tunic and dress were confined round the waist by the string of her apron. A white, square cap showed her gray hair, parted on her forehead. Like several of the women of her kindred, she wore a coral necklace, bracelets of filagree work set with garnets, and other gold and silver ornaments manufactured at Autun.* Around Mamm' Margarid the children of her son Guilhern and of several of her kindred were playing, while the young mothers were occupied in preparations for the evening repast.

"Margarid," said Joel to his wife, "I bring you a guest."

"He is welcome," answered Mamm' Margarid, plying her distaff. "The gods have sent us a guest, our hearth is his. The eve of my daughter's birthday is auspicious to us."

"May your children receive the same welcome, when they travel, that you give to me," said the stranger, respectfully.

"And do you know what a guest the gods have sent us, Margarid?" resumed Joel. "Such a guest as one would ask of the good Ogmi for the long autumn and winter evenings; a guest who has seen so many curious and wonderful things in his travels, that a hundred evenings would not be too much in which to hear all his stories."

Scarcely had Joel uttered these words, when all, from Mamm' Margarid and the young mothers to the maidens and little children, gazed at the stranger with eager expectation of the wonderful tales which he would relate.

"Let us have supper soon," said Joel; "our guest is perhaps as hungry as myself, and I am famishing!"

"Our kinsmen are filling the mangers of the cattle," said Margarid; "they will speedily return. If our guest is willing, we will wait supper for them."

"I thank the wife of Joel, and will wait," returned the stranger.

"And in the mean time tell us a story," said Joel.

"Friend," answered the traveler, interrupting him with a smile, "as one cup serves for all, so one story serves for all. By and by the cup will circulate from lip to lip, and the story from ear to ear. But tell me, what is that brass belt which I see hanging on the wall?"

"Why, have you not the belt of agility also in your country?"

"Explain yourself, Joel."

"Among us, the youth of each tribe come

* Mamm', a title of respect among the Gauls, signifying dame, or mother.

* "The Autun jewels," says Posidonius, "were very finely wrought, and enriched with coral, of which there were several banks in the Hyeres." "There were in Gaul," says Theophrastus, "besides mines of gold, silver, iron, tin, and copper, mines of garnets, called carbuncles, the smallest of which was sold for forty pieces of gold in the time of Alexander the Great."

every new moon to the house of the chief to try on this belt, in order to show that they are not bloated by debauchery, and that they continue light and agile.* Those who cannot clasp the belt around their waist are hooted at, derided, and fined. In this way, every one keeps guard on his stomach, so as not to look like a wine-skin on stilts."

"The custom is a good one; I regret that it has fallen into disuse in my province. But pray tell me what you do with that great old-fashioned chest? The wood is precious, and it seems very ancient."

"Very ancient. It is the trophy-chest of my family," said Joel, opening the chest, in which the traveler saw several bleached skulls. One of them had been sawed in two and mounted on a brass stand in the fashion of a cup.

"These are doubtless the heads of enemies killed by your fathers, friend Joel. Among us, this kind of family charnel-house was long since abandoned."

"And among us also. I preserve these skulls through respect for my ancestors; for it is more than two hundred years since prisoners of war were mutilated in this manner. This custom dates back to the times of the kings whom Ritha Gawr shaved, as you say, to make himself a sagum of their beards. That was in the days of barbarism, which passed away with royalty. I have heard my grandfather Kirio say that, even in the lifetime of his father Tiras, the warriors returned to their tribe with the heads of their enemies planted on the end of their lances or fastened by the hair to their horses' manes; after which they were nailed to the doors of the houses as trophies, as you see the heads of wild beasts nailed here to the wall."†

"Among us in olden times, friend Joel, these trophies were also kept, but the heads of our enemies' chiefs were preserved in cedar oil."

"By Hesus! in cedar oil! what luxury!" said Joel, laughing. "'A good fish needs good sauce,' as the housewives say."

"These relics among us, as among you, were the books from which the young Gaul learned the exploits of his ancestors. The families of the vanquished often sought to redeem these spoils, but for a man to part for money with a head thus conquered by himself or his fathers, was a crime of unexampled avarice and impiety. I say, like you, that these barbarous customs passed away with the kings, as well as those of the times when our ancestors dyed their faces and bodies blue and scarlet, and dipped their hair and beards into lime-water in order to make them of a brilliant red."*

"Without meaning to insult their memory, friend guest, our ancestors could not thus have been very pleasing to the eye, and must have resembled the frightful red and blue dragons that serve as figure-heads to the vessels of those terrible Northern pirates of which my son Albinik the sailor and his handsome wife Meroë has told us such curious stories. But here are our kinsmen returning from the sheep-folds; we shall not have to wait long now for supper, for Margarid is taking the sheep from the spit. You shall try them, my friend, and see what a fine flavor the salt meadows on which they feed give their flesh."

All the men of the family of Joel that entered the hall wore, like him, a sagum or blouse of coarse stuff, without sleeves, allowing those of the white linen shirt or tunic to pass through; their braga, or trowsers, fell to the ankles, and they were shod with wooden shoes. A few of the husbandmen, who had just come from the fields, had loose sheepskin jackets on their shoulders, which they threw aside. All had woolen caps; their hair was long and clipped round, and their beard was flowing. The last two that entered were arm-in-arm; they were remarkably handsome and robust.

"Friend Joel, who are those two young men?" asked the stranger. "The statues of the Pagan god Mars are not more faultless, and have not a more heroic air."

"They are two of my kinsmen—two cousins—Julyan and Armel; they love each other like brothers. A furious bull lately rushed at Armel, and Julyan saved him at the peril of his life. Hesus be thanked! we are not at war; but if ever we are forced to take up arms, Julyan and Armel have sworn to be saldunes.† Ah! supper is ready. Come, the seat of honor belongs to you."

Joel and the stranger approached the table; it was round, and slightly elevated above the ground, which was covered with

* "To have a fine, military bearing and to preserve their lightness and agility," says Amédée Thierry, "was regarded among the Gauls as a point of honor and a duty to the country. The young men went at regular intervals to measure their waists by a belt deposited with the chief of the tribe. Those who exceeded the official standard of corpulence were severely reprimanded as idle and dissolute, and were punished by a fine."

† "The heads of enemies renowned for their courage," says Livy, "were deposited in great chests; in these books the young Gauls studied the exploits of their ancestors, and each strove to add a new page thereto." These barbarous customs, however, had been long since abandoned at the time of this story.

* These customs were common among the Gauls and Germans.

† Among the Gauls, says Cæsar, those who called themselves saldunes swore always to share the same fate, whether they were attached to a chief or fought together. Happy and rich, they shared each other's prosperity; unhappy and poor, they shared each other's reverses. If one perished by violence, the other killed himself.

fresh straw. Around the table were benches, cushioned with fragrant hay. The two roasted sheep, cut up in quarters, were served on large beechen platters, as white as ivory; there were also huge pieces of salt pork, and a smoked boar's ham; the fish remained in the great copper kettle in which it had been boiled.

By the place where Joel, the head of the family, took his seat, was seen an immense cup of plated copper, which two thirsty men could not have drained. Before this cup, which marked the seat of honor, the stranger took his place, with Joel at his right hand and Mamm' Margarid at his left. The old men, women, young girls and children then took their places around the table; the middle-aged men and youths ranged themselves behind, in a second row of seats, from which they rose now and then to perform the duties of attendants in turn, going from time to time to replenish the great cup from a cask of hydromel in the corner, when it had been emptied by passing from hand to hand, beginning with the stranger. Each one, furnished with a piece of barley or wheat bread, received or helped himself to a slice of roast or salt meat, which he tore with his teeth or cut with his knife. The old war-dog, Deber Trud, enjoying the privilege of his years and long services, lay at the feet of Joel, who did not forget this faithful servant.

Toward the end of the meal, Joel, having sliced up the boar's ham, cut off the foot,* according to an ancient custom, and gave it to his young kinsman, Armel, saying, "To you, Armel, belongs the morsel of the brave; to you, the victor in last night's wrestling match."

Just as Armel, exulting at being acknowledged as the bravest in the presence of the stranger, stretched out his hand to take the boar's foot, presented him by Joel, a dwarf belonging to the family, called Rabouzigued, or little man, on account of his small stature, exclaimed, "Armel was victorious in last night's match because Julyan did not wrestle with him; two bulls of equal strength are always afraid of each other, and never fight."

Julyan and Armel, humiliated at hearing it said before a stranger that they did not wrestle together because they feared each other, turned crimson, and Julyan cried, with sparkling eyes, "If I did not wrestle with Armel, it was because some one else was before me; but Julyan is not any more afraid of Armel, than Armel is of Julyan, and if you were a cubit taller, Rabouzigued, I would show on the spot, beginning with you, that I am afraid of no one, not even of my good brother Armel."

"My good brother Julyan," returned Armel, whose eyes also began to sparkle, "we ought to prove to the stranger that we are not afraid of each other."

"Agreed, Armel, let us fight with sword and buckler."

"Agreed, Julyan."*

The two friends shook hands warmly, for these young men were moved by no ill-will, but loved each other as much as ever, and were about to fight only through excess of valor. Joel was not displeased to see his kinsmen bear themselves bravely before his guest, and the family shared his feelings. At the announcement of the contest, all, to the little children, wives and maidens, were delighted, and clapped their hands, smiling and looking at each other, proud of the good idea that the stranger would have of the courage of their family.

Mamm' Margarid then said to the young men, "The contest must cease when I lay down my distaff."

"These children are doing their best to entertain you, friend guest," said Joel to the stranger; "you will entertain them, in turn, by telling them, as well as us, of the wonderful things you have seen in your travels."

"I will requite your hospitality as well as I can, my friend," replied the stranger. "I will tell you the stories you wish."

"Come, let us make haste, brother Julyan," said Armel, "I am anxious to hear the traveler. I should never tire of listening to stories; but story-tellers are rare at Karnak."

"You see, my friend," said Joel, "with what impatience your stories are expected; but before beginning them, to give you strength, you shall presently drink the health of the victor in good old Gallic wine." Then turning to his son, "Guilhern," said he, "go bring that little cask of white wine from Beziers which your brother Albinik brought us on his last voyage, and fill the cup in honor of the traveler."

When this was done, Joel said to Armel: "Come, children, to arms! to arms!"

* "It was formerly the usage," says Posidonius, "to give the foot or thigh of the animal to the bravest of the guests, or to him who claimed to be such. If any one dared to dispute it with him, a deadly combat ensued."

* "After their meals," says Posidonius, "the Gauls were fond of taking up arms and challenging each other to feigned duels. At first it was naught but sport, and they attacked and parried playfully, but if they chanced to wound each other, they warmed to the contest, and fought so fiercely that if the spectators did not hasten to separate them, one remained on the field."

CHAPTER III.

Combat of Julyan and Armel.—Mamm' Margarid lowers her distaff too late.—Death of Armel.—Strange commissions given the dying.—The substitute.—Payment by Rabouzigued of the debt beyond the grave.—Armel dies grieved at not having heard the traveler's stories.—Julyan promises to go and repeat them to him elsewhere.—The stranger begins his stories.—Story of Albrega, the Gallic woman of the banks of the Rhine.—Margarid, in turn, relates the story of her ancestor, Siomara, and the profligate Roman officer.—The stranger harshly reproaches Joel for his love of stories, and tells him that the time has come to take up the lance and sword.

THE numerous family of Joel, ranged in a semi-circle at the lower end of the great hall, impatiently awaited the contest, while Mamm' Margarid, with the stranger at her right hand, Joel at her left, and the two smallest children on her lap, gave the signal for battle by raising her distaff.

Julyan and Armel stripped themselves to the waist, keeping nothing but their brago. They again shook hands, took on their left arm a wooden buckler covered with seal-skin, armed themselves with a heavy copper sword,* and fell impetuously on each other, more and more animated by the presence of the stranger, in whose eyes they were anxious to display their address and courage. The guest of Joel seemed better pleased than any one at the proposal of the contest; his face appeared to all more manly and prouder than before.

Julyan and Armel struggled with all their might. Their eyes sparkled, not with hatred, but with a proud excess of valor; and they exchanged words, not of anger, but of friendly jocularity, while dealing each other terrible blows, which would, indeed, have been mortal, had they not been adroitly avoided. At each lunge, brilliantly made, or dexterously parried by means of the buckler, men, women, and children clapped their hands, and cried, according as the battle turned, "Her, her, Julyan!" or "Her, her, Armel!"† The cries, the sight of the combatants, and the noise of the weapons, even aroused the martial ardor of the old war-dog, Deber Trud, who growled fiercely, looking at his master, who soothed him by stroking him with his hand.

Already the perspiration trickled from the beautiful, youthful, and robust bodies of Julyan and Armel, equal in courage, vigor, and agility, but they had not yet touched each other.

"Let us make haste, brother Julyan," said Armel, springing on his companion with new impetuosity. "Let us make haste, that we may listen to the beautiful stories of the traveler."

"The plow cannot go faster than the husbandman, brother Armel," answered Julyan. Saying this, he seized his sword with both hands, drew himself up to his full height, and dealt his adversary so furious a blow that, although the latter, springing backward, attempted to parry it with his buckler, the buckler was splintered in pieces, and the sword struck Armel so heavily on the temple that, after staggering for a moment in the effort to keep his feet, he fell his whole length, while all present, admiring the dexterous blow, clapped their hands, crying, "Her, her, Julyan," Rabouzigued, above all the rest.

Mamm' Margarid, after laying down her distaff, to denote the end of the combat, went to look after the wounded youth, while Joel said to the stranger, handing him the great cup, "Friend guest, drink this old wine to the triumph of Julyan!"

"I drink to the triumph of Julyan, and also to the valiant defeat of Armel," replied the stranger, "for the courage of the vanquished equals the courage of the victor. I have seen many combats, but never more bravery and address. Honor to your family, Joel; honor to your tribe!"

"In olden times, these festal combats took place among us almost every evening," said Joel; "now they are rare, wrestling-matches having taken their place; sword-fights, however, are more after the fashion of the old Gauls."

Mamm' Margarid, after examining the wounded man, shook her head twice, while Julyan supported his friend against the wall. One of the young women hastened to bring a small box filled with linen and balsam, and containing a little vessel full of mistletoe-water.* The blood was flowing in torrents from the wound of Armel, and, when staunched by Mamm' Margarid, disclosed the pale face and half-closed eyes of the vanquished youth.

"Brother Armel," said Julyan, in a friendly tone, kneeling beside him, "brother Armel, do not give way to such a trifle; every one has his day and hour. To-day you are wounded, to-morrow it will be I. We have fought like brave men. The stranger will remember the youth of Karnak, and of the family of Joel, the brenn of the tribe."

Armel, his head drooping on his breast, and his brow already covered with a cold sweat, did not appear to hear his friend's voice. Mamm' Margarid shook her head anew, and called for some lighted coals, which were brought her on a small stone; she threw on them some pulverized mistletoe-bark; a thick vapor rose from the coals, which she held under Armel's nos-

* For a long time, and even at the epoch of the Roman invasion, the Gauls used nothing but well-sharpened copper swords.

† "Her, her!"—a cry of encouragement of the Gauls, analogous to the "Evohe!" of the Romans.

* The mistletoe, being a sacred plant, was considered a universal specific in Gaul.

trils. In a few moments he opened his eyes, looked around him, as if waking from a dream, and said at last in a feeble voice, "The angel of death calls me; I am going to live elsewhere.* My father and mother will be surprised and glad to see me again so soon. I shall also be glad to see them." He added, in a regretful tone, "Nevertheless, I should have been very glad to hear the traveler's beautiful stories."

"What! brother Armel," exclaimed Julyan, in a tone of surprise and grief, "are you going to leave us so soon? We were very happy together. We had sworn to be saldunes, and never to quit each other."

"We had sworn it, Julyan," returned Armel, feebly, "but it is otherwise decreed."

Julyan buried his face in his hands and made no reply. Mamm' Margarid, who was skilled in the art of healing wounds, which she had learned of a Druidess, her kinswoman, laid her hand on Armel's heart. In a few moments she said to those present, who, like Joel and his guest, had crowded round the wounded youth:

"Teutates calls Armel, to conduct him to the abode of those who have gone before us; he will speedily go thither. Let those who wish to send any messages by Armel to their friends whom he will meet elsewhere make haste." Then, kissing the forehead of the dying youth, she said, "You will give to all our family the kiss of remembrance and hope. Letters will be deposited for them on your funeral-pile to-morrow.†

"I will give them the kiss of remembrance and hope for you, Mamm' Margarid," answered Armel in a feeble voice. Then he added in a tone of chagrin, "Nevertheless, I should have been very glad to hear the traveler's beautiful stories." These words seemed deeply to impress Julyan, who still supported his friend's head, and gazed at him with a mournful air.

Little Sylvest, a rosy-cheeked, fair-haired child, stepped forward, holding the hand of his mother Henory, and said to the dying Armel, "I loved little Alanik dearly; he left us last year. Tell him that little Sylvest often thinks of him, and kiss him for me, Armel." Then, letting go of his mother's hand, the child pressed his infantile lips to the cold forehead of the dying youth, who answered with a smile:

"I will kiss little Alanik for you, Sylvest." Then he added again, "Nevertheless, I should have been very glad to hear the traveler's beautiful stories."

Another of the family of Joel said to the dying youth, "I was a friend of our neighbor Hoüarne, of the tribe of Morlech. He was killed while sleeping, defenseless, a short time since. Tell him, Armel, that his murderer Daoulas has been discovered, tried and condemned by the Druids of Karnak, and that his punishment will speedily take place. Hoüarne will be glad to learn of the punishment of Daoulas, his murderer."

Armel made a sign that he would tell Hoüarne this news.

Rabouzigued, who had been the cause of all this, not through wickedness, but through the intemperance of his tongue, also approached to give a commission to him who was going to another world. "You know," said he, "that on the eighth moon of this month, old Mark, who lives near Glenhan, fell ill, and the angel of death told him also to prepare to depart speedily. Old Mark was not ready; he wished to be present at his granddaughter's wedding. Old Mark not being ready, therefore, bethought himself of finding some one to go in his stead in order to satisfy the angel of death, and asked the Druid, his physician, whether he knew of a substitute.* The Druid answered that Gigel of Nouarën, of our tribe, bore the reputation of being obliging, and that perhaps he would consent to go in the place of old Mark, to do him a kindness and to be pleasing to the gods, who are always gratified by this kind of sacrifice. Gigel readily consented. Old Mark made him a present of ten silver

* As we have already said, according to the Druidical faith, men did not die; the soul quitted this world for another, where it put on a new fleshly covering. This faith in the perpetuity of life, or in successive stages of existence, gave the Gauls that contempt of death in all circumstances which is pointed out by all the historians of antiquity as the most characteristic feature of the race. Aristotle asserts that the Gauls carried their contempt of danger so far as to refuse to flee from a falling house. Horace defines Gaul as the land where the fear of death is unfelt. Polybius says that, while the Romans did not go into battle till they had rendered themselves invulnerable, the Gauls, stripping themselves of their ordinary garments, went thither almost naked; such were the foremost ranks of their army, composed of the youngest, handsomest, and bravest of their number. At first sight, before making the trial of the sword, the enemy himself felt a sort of terror at this superhuman rashness. Wounded with two-edged axes, or pierced with sword-thrusts, says Pausanius, the ardor of their souls never cooled while they had breath; they tore the arrows from their wounds, and used them against the Greeks.

† Diodorus Siculus says that the Gauls deposited letters to the dead from their relatives on the funeral pile, that they might be read by the defunct who had gone, before them.

* Posidonius says with respect to this strange custom, "Whenever a Gaul fell seriously ill, he regarded it as a warning from the angel of death to hold himself in readiness to depart; but when he had important affairs to finish, was anxious to live for the sake of his family, or felt an aversion to death from any cause whatsoever, if none of his friends or kinsmen were disposed to go in his place, he sent in search of a substitute, who soon came, accompanied by a troop of friends, to stipulate for a sum of money as the price of his blood, which he often distributed as a farewell gift among his companions. Sometimes this consisted merely of a cask of wine. A stage was erected and a kind of festival given; then, the banquet finished, the hero stretched himself on his buckler and bared his bosom to the sacred knife."

This custom of our fathers seems barbarous in its native grandeur, but let us not forget that in our days the rich man who dreads the fatigues of a soldier's life or is afraid of dying in battle also buys a substitute.

horse-heads,* which Gigel distributed among his friends before his departure; then, joyfully emptying his last cup, he extended his neck to the sacred knife, amidst the songs of the bards. The angel of death accepted the exchange, for old Mark saw his granddaughter married, and is to-day in good health."

"Do you wish to go in my place, then, Rabouzigued?" asked Armel. "I am afraid that it is too late."

"No, no, I do not wish to go in your place," Rabouzigued hastened to reply; "I only beg you to give Gigel these three pieces of silver that I owe him. I could not pay him before, and I am afraid that he will come for them by moonlight in the shape of a demon." And Rabouzigued rummaged his little lamb-skin pouch for the three pieces of silver, which he found and placed in Armel's sagum.

"I will give your money to Gigel," said the dying youth, in an almost inaudible voice; and he murmured in Julyan's ear, "Nevertheless, I should have been very glad—to hear—the traveler's—beautiful stories."

"Rest content, brother Armel," then said Julyan, in a low tone; "I will listen attentively to the beautiful stories this evening and learn them by heart, and to-morrow I will go and repeat them to you. It will be dull for me here without you. We have pledged our faith as saldunes never to quit each other; I will go, therefore, to live with you in the other world."

"Really! you will come?" exclaimed Armel, whom this promise appeared to render very happy; "you will come to-morrow?"†

"To-morrow, I swear to you by Hesus that I will come."

And all the family, on hearing the promise of Julyan, regarded him with esteem. The wounded youth appeared even better satisfied than the rest, and said to his friend, in a dying voice, "Then we shall soon meet again, brother Julyan. Listen attentively to the stories. Now, farewell—farewell to all our tribe." With these words, Armel waved his dying hands toward those around him. And as loving friends crowd round one of their number that is about to set out on a long journey, in which he will meet persons dear to the memory of all, so each one shook Armel by the hand, and gave him tender messages for those of the family or tribe whom he would soon behold.

When Armel was dead, Joel closed the eyes of his kinsman, and caused him to be carried to the stone altar, on which was the copper basin with the mistletoe-twigs. The body was then covered with oak-boughs stripped from the altar, so that in a few moments nothing was visible of the corpse but a mound of verdure, by the side of which Julyan remained seated. The head of the family then filled the great cup to the brim with wine, moistened his lips in it, and said, offering it to the stranger, "May the journey of Armel be happy, for Armel has always been just and good; may Teutates be his guide through the marvelous spheres and countries beyond the tomb, which none of us have yet visited, but where we shall all go; and may Armel soon meet all whom we have loved, and assure them that we still cherish their memory."

The cup went round, and the women and young girls offered up prayers for Armel's prosperous journey. The remains of the supper were then removed, and all seated themselves round the hearth, impatiently waiting for the stories promised by the traveler. The latter, seeing all eyes fixed on him with curiosity, said to Joel:

"Then you wish me to tell you a story?"

"A story!" exclaimed Joel. "Say, rather, twenty stories—a hundred stories! You, who have seen so many things, men, and countries, to talk of one story! Ah! by the good Ogmi, you will not be let off with one story, friend guest!"

"Oh, no; oh, no!" repeated all the members of the family, with a determined air, "we must have more than one story."

"Yet there is something better to do, in these times, than to relate and tell frivolous tales," said the stranger, with a pensive and austere air.

"I do not understand you," returned Joel, not less surprised than his family; and all gazed silently, for a moment, at the stranger.

"No, you do not understand me, I see," replied the latter, sadly. "Then I will keep my promise; a thing promised is a thing owed," he added, pointing to Julyan, who still sat at the end of the hall, by the body of Armel covered with foliage; "this young man must have something to repeat to his friend to-morrow, when he goes to rejoin him in another world."

"Proceed, our guest," answered Julyan, with his face still buried in his hands; "the story, the story! I will not lose a word; Armel shall have the story precisely as you tell it."

* Most of the Gallic coins were stamped with a horse's head. With respect to the custom of commissioning the dying to pay debts beyond the tomb, and of contracting debts payable after death—a custom which shows how deeply rooted the belief in immortality was in the mind of the Gauls, Pomponius Mela says, "Loans were made to be repaid in another world, and the payment of debts was even postponed till after death." "After quitting the walls of Marseilles," says Valerius, "I found the old Gallic custom of lending money to be repaid after death;" for the Gauls are persuaded that the souls of men are immortal."

† "Some of the Gauls," says Pomponius Mela, "place themselves voluntarily on the funeral-pile of their friends, wishing to continue to live with them after death."

"Two years ago, when I was traveling among the Gauls, on the banks of the Rhine," resumed the stranger, "I found myself one day at Strasburg. I left the city to walk on the banks of the river. Before long I saw a great crowd of people coming toward me, following a man and woman, both young and beautiful, who were carrying a shield between them, on which lay a babe only a few days old. The man seemed anxious and gloomy, the woman was pale and calm. Both stopped on the bank of the river, at a place where the current is rapid. The crowd stopped with the two persons whom they were following. I approached and asked some one who the man and woman were. 'The man is named Vindorix, and the woman Albrega; they are husband and wife,' was the answer. I then saw Vindorix, with a still gloomier air, approach his wife and say, 'Behold, the time has come.'

"'Do you insist on it?' answered Albrega; 'do you insist on it?'

"'Yes,' returned the husband. 'I doubt, I desire certainty."

"'So let it be,' she replied.

"Then, taking up the buckler on which his little child lay smiling and stretching out its arms to him, Vindorix waded to his waist into the river, and raised the buckler and the infant for an instant above his head, turning round toward his wife for the last time, as if to threaten her with what he was about to do; but she stood erect on the bank, with an uplifted brow and firm glance, as motionless as a statue, with her arms folded on her breast. In reply, she stretched her right hand toward her husband, as if to say, 'Do it.' A shudder ran through the crowd, for Vindorix, after placing the buckler containing his child on the waves, abandoned the frail bark to the rapid current."

"O the wicked man!" cried Mamm' Margarid, moved by the recital, as well as all the family of Joel. "And his wife, his wife, who remained on the bank?"

"But what was the cause of this cruelty, friend guest?" asked Henory, Guilhern's young wife, embracing her children, little Sylvest and Siomara, and clasping them to her breast as if fearing a like danger for them. The stranger put an end to these questions by motioning for silence, and proceeded.

"Scarcely had the current borne away the buckler and the child when the father raised his clasped and trembling hands to heaven, as though invoking the aid of the gods. He followed the buckler with his eyes, with gloomy anguish, leaning to the right if it inclined to the right, or to the left if it inclined to the left. The mother, on the contrary, with her arms still folded on her breast, watched the buckler with so firm and tranquil a gaze that she seemed to have no fears for her child."

"No fears," exclaimed Guilhern, "on seeing her child thus exposed to almost certain death—for of course it perished!"

"What an unnatural mother!" cried Henory.

"And not a man in the crowd to throw himself into the river and save the child!" said Julyan, thinking of his friend. "Oh! how this will incense Armel's kind heart when I tell him the story."

"Do not keep interrupting every moment," said Joel. "Proceed, friend guest; may Teutates, who watches over travelers in this and other worlds, protect the poor babe!"

"Twice the buckler and child were well-nigh swallowed up by one of the whirlpools of the river," resumed the stranger. "The mother alone did not move. Ere long the shield was seen floating like a little skiff on the smooth waters below. Then all the crowd cried, clapping their hands, 'The boat! the boat!' Two men ran, launched a boat, and, rowing with all their might, in a few moments reached the buckler and drew it from the water, together with the sleeping infant."

"Thank the gods! it is saved," cried the family of Joel with one voice, as if delivered from painful anxiety.

The stranger continued, perceiving that he was about to be interrupted by new questions:

"While they were rescuing the buckler and child from the water, the father, Vindorix, whose features were as radiant as they had before been gloomy, rushed to his wife, and cried, opening his arms to her, 'Albrega, Albrega, you spoke truly; you have been faithful to me!'

"But Albrega, repulsing her husband by a gesture, replied proudly, 'Certain of my honor, I did not fear the ordeal. I was tranquil respecting the fate of my child; the gods could not punish an innocent mother by destroying her son. But a woman suspected is a woman outraged. I shall keep my child, and you, who doubted the honor of your wife, will never behold either of us more.'

"At this moment, the child was brought back in triumph. The mother threw herself on it like a lioness on her young, and clasped it passionately in her arms, showering eager kisses on it with a violence proportioned to her past calmness and serenity, then fled with it as though escaping with her prey."

"Ah! she was a true Gallic woman!" said the wife of Guilhern. "'A woman suspected is a woman outraged'—these are proud words; I like them."

"But," resumed Joel, "is this ordeal, then, a custom among the Gauls of the Rhine?"

"Yes," replied the stranger. "When a hus-

band suspects his wife of being unfaithful to him, he places her new-born babe on a buckler, and exposes it in the current of the river. If the child continues to float, the innocence of the wife is proved; if it is swallowed up in the waves, the crime of the mother is made manifest."*

"And how was this courageous woman dressed?" asked Henory, the wife of Guilhern. "Did she wear a tunic like ours?"

"No; the tunic of these people is very short and of two colors; the bodice blue, for instance, and the skirt red."

"And their caps," asked a young girl, "are they white and square like ours?"

"No, they are black and round, and are often embroidered with gold and silver thread."

"And what of their bucklers?" asked Guilhern; "are they made like ours?"

"They are longer," replied the traveler, "and are painted in squares, usually red and white."

"And how are their marriages performed?" asked a young girl.

"And are their flocks as fine as ours?" questioned an old man.

"And have they bold fighting-cocks like us?"† asked a child.

Joel, seeing the stranger so overwhelmed with questions, cried, "Enough, enough; give our friend time to breathe; you scream round him like a flock of gulls."

"And do they pay the money that they owe to the dead, like us?" asked Rabouzigued, in spite of Joel's injunction to put no more questions to the stranger.

"Yes, their custom is like ours," replied the stranger; "they are not idolaters like a man from Asia, whom I met at Marseilles, and who pretended, according to his religion, that we continue to live after death, not in the form of men, but of animals."

"Her, her!" cried Rabouzigued, in great anxiety. "If that is the case, Gigel, who sacrificed himself in the place of old Mark, perhaps inhabits the body of a fish, and I have sent him three pieces of silver by Armel, who, perhaps, at this moment is living in the body of a bird. How could a bird give money to a fish? Her, her!"

"Our friend tells you that this belief is idolatry, Rabouzigued," returned Joel, sternly. "Your fears, therefore, are impious."

"It must be so," said Julyan, sadly; "for what would become of me, who am going to rejoin Armel to-morrow, according to my oath and for our friendship's sake, if I should find him a bird, myself being, perhaps, a stag of the forests or an an ox of the fields?"

"Fear nothing, young man," said the stranger to Julyan; "the religion of Hesus is the only true faith; it teaches us that after death we shall live again in bodies younger and more beautiful than before."

"Such is my hope," said the dwarf, Rabouzigued.

"What a fine thing it is to travel!" resumed Joel; "how many things one learns! But hold, in order not to be behind you, friend guest, we will give you story for story. Ask Margarid to tell you the noble deed of her ancestress almost a hundred and thirty years ago, at the time when our fathers went to Asia to found New Gaul, for there are few countries in the world which their feet did not tread."

"After your wife's story," returned the stranger, "since you wish to speak of our fathers, for my part, I have also something to say of them; and, by Ritha Gawr! never was the moment better chosen; for, while we are telling each other stories here, you know not what is taking place elsewhere. You are ignorant that at this very moment, perhaps—"

"Why do you stop?" said Joel, in surprise. "What is it that is taking place elsewhere while we are telling stories? And how can we better pass the time in the chimney-corner, during the long, cold evenings of autumn?"

Instead of replying, the stranger turned to Mamm' Margarid, and said respectfully, "I will listen to the story of the wife of Joel."

"It is a very simple story," answered Margarid, still plying her distaff. "The story is as simple as the deed of my ancestress. She was called Siomara."

"And in honor of her," said Guilhern, interrupting his mother, and pointing with pride to an eight-year old child, of wonderful beauty, "in honor of our ancestress, Siomara, who was as brave as she was beautiful, I have given her name to the little girl you see here."

"A more charming child never was seen," said the stranger, struck by the loveliness of little Siomara. "I am certain she will have the heroism of her ancestress, as she already has her beauty."

Henory, the mother of the child, blushed with pleasure at these words, and said to Mamm' Margarid, smiling, "I dare not blame Guilhern for interrupting you, since it has won me such a compliment."

"This compliment is as sweet to me as to you, my daughter," answered Mamm' Margarid, as she resumed her story.

"My ancestress was named Siomara; she was the daughter of Ronan. Her father took her with him to Lower Languedoc, where he went to trade. The Gauls of that country were then preparing for an expedition to the East. Their chief, who was

* This ordeal is described by Martin, Thierry and other historians.

† The Gallic fighting-cocks, the image of which surmounted the battle-flags, were in great request.

named Oriëgon, saw my ancestress, was struck by her great beauty, won her love, and married her. Siomara set out with her husband on the Eastern expedition. At first the Gauls triumphed, then they were attacked by the Romans, who were always jealous of the Gallic conquests. In one of these engagements, Siomara, who, through duty and pleasure, accompanied Oriëgon, her husband, to battle in her chariot of war, was separated from him during the conflict, taken prisoner, and placed in the charge of an avaricious and profligate Roman officer. This Roman, struck with the great beauty of Siomara, attempted to seduce her and was repulsed. Taking advantage of his captive's sleep, he committed violence on her."

"Do you hear, Joel?" exclaimed the stranger with indignation, "do you hear? The ancestress of your wife endured such an outrage from a Roman!"

"Listen to the end of the story, friend guest," returned Joel, "and you will see that Siomara was worthy of the Gallic woman of the Rhine."

"Both alike showed themselves faithful to this maxim," continued Margarid: "There are three phases of modesty in the Gallic women: the first, when her father declares, in her presence, that he gives her hand to him she loves; the second, when she enters the nuptial-chamber; and the third, when she appears again before men. The Roman had outraged Siomara, his captive. His desires satisfied, he offered her liberty in exchange for a ransom. She accepted the proposal and induced the Roman to send one of her servants, a prisoner like herself, to the camp of the Gauls, to tell Oriëgon, or his friends, in his absence, to bring the ransom to a designated spot. The avaricious Roman, wishing to receive the ransom himself without being obliged to share it with any one, conducted Siomara alone to the place agreed on. The friends of Oriëgon were there with the gold for the ransom. While the Roman was counting out the sum fixed, Siomara, addressing the Gauls in their own tongue, commanded them to slay the wretch. This done, she cut off his head and, putting it in the skirt of her dress, returned to the Gallic camp. Oriëgon, who had likewise been taken prisoner, had succeeded in escaping, and reached the camp at the same time with his wife. The latter, at the sight of her husband, let the head of the Roman fall at his feet, and, addressing Oriëgon, said, 'This is the head of a man who had outraged me. None but thyself can now boast of having possessed me.'"*

The story finished, Mamm' Margarid continued to ply her distaff.

"Did I not tell you, friend," said Joel, "that Siomara—Margarid's ancestress—was worthy of the woman of the Rhine?"

"And ought not this noble name to bring happiness to my daughter?" added Guilhern, tenderly kissing the fair head of his child.

"This noble and modest story is worthy of the lips that have related it," said the stranger. "It proves, too, that the Romans, our implacable enemies, have not changed. Covetous and profligate—such they were, such they are still. And since we are on the subject of covetous and profligate Romans, and you like stories," added he, with a bitter smile, "know that I have been to Rome, and that I have seen Julius Cæsar, the most famous of the Roman generals, and also the most avaricious and infamous debauchee that there is in all Italy; his profligacy is such that I cannot speak of it in the ears of your wives and maidens."

"So you have seen the famous Julius Cæsar! What kind of a man is he?" asked Joel, with curiosity.

The stranger looked at the brenn as though greatly surprised by his question, and replied, appearing to try to curb his anger:

"Cæsar is approaching middle age; h is of middle stature; he has a long, thin face pale complexion, black eyes, and bald head; but, as this man unites in himself all the vices of the most profligate Roman women, he is, like them, vain of his person. To conceal his baldness, therefore, he always wears a wreath of golden leaves on his brow. Is your curiosity satisfied, Joel? Would you also like to know that Cæsar has the falling sickness—would you like to know—"

The stranger abruptly stopped short, and looking angrily round on the family of the brenn, exclaimed:

"By the wrath of Hesus! are you all ignorant, then—so many of you as there are here fit to wield the sword, yet thirsting after idle tales—are you ignorant, then, that a Roman army, under the command of Cæsar, after invading half our provinces, has taken up its winter quarters in Orleanais, Touraine, and Anjou?"

"Yes, yes; we have heard of these things," said Joel, calmly; "some people from Anjou, who came here to buy cattle and hogs, told us of them."

"And is it with this indifference that you speak of the invasion of Gaul by the Romans?" cried the traveler.

"Never have the Breton Gauls been invaded by strangers," proudly replied the brenn of the tribe of Karnak. "We shall always remain free from such a stain. We are independent of the Gauls of Poitou, Touraine, Orleanais, and the other provinces,

* This historical incident is related by Henri Martin and other historians.

as they are independent of us. They have not asked our assistance. We are not the ones to offer ourselves to their chiefs and to fight under their banners; let each one protect his own honor and province. The Romans are in Touraine, but Touraine is a long way from here."

"So that if the Northern pirates should slay your son, Albinik the sailor, and his brave wife, Meroë, it would not affect you, because the murder would have been committed far from here?"

"You jest. My son is my son. The Gauls of other provinces than mine are not my sons!"

"Are you not the sons of one and the same God, as the Druid religion teaches you? If this is so, are not all the Gauls brothers, and does not the subjugation or the blood of a brother cry out for vengeance? So long, then, as the enemy is not at your door, you feel no anxiety. As well might the hand, knowing the foot to be mortified, say, 'For my part, I am sound, and the foot is far from the hand. I have no reason, therefore, to trouble myself about it.' But, the mortification not being arrested, spreads from the foot to the other members, and the whole body speedily perishes."

"Unless the sound hand takes an axe and chops off the foot from which the disease comes," said the brenn.

"And what becomes of a body thus mutilated, Joel?" rejoined Mamm' Margarid, who had listened in silence. "When the fairest provinces of our country have been invaded by strangers, what will become of the rest of Gaul? Thus mutilated and dismembered, how can it defend itself against its enemies?"

"The worthy spouse of my host speaks wisely," said the traveler, respectfully addressing Mamm' Margarid; "like every Gallic matron, she will fill her place in the public council as worthily as in the midst of her household."

"You say truly," returned Joel; "Mamm' Margarid has a brave heart and a wise mind; her advice is often better than mine; I say it willingly. But this time I am right. Whatever may happen to the rest of Gaul, never will the Roman set foot in our old Brittany. She has for her safeguards her shoals, her marshes, her forests, her rocks, and, most of all, her Bretons."

"At these words of her husband, Mamm' Margarid shook her head, but all the men of Joel's family applauded what he had said.

The stranger resumed, with a gloomy air, "Be it so—a last story; but may it fall on all your hearts like molten brass, since the wise words of the matron of the house have been in vain." All looked at the stranger with surprise, as he began his tale.

CHAPTER IV.

The traveler relates the story which was to fall like molten brass on the heart of Joel, who had been mad enough to answer that it was a long way from Touraine to Brittany.—Joel is beginning to comprehend the usefulness of the lesson, when his two sons, Mikael the armorer and Albinik the sailor, suddenly arrive from Auray, in the middle of the night, with terrible news.

THE traveler, with a stern and gloomy air, commenced his story as follows:

"For the last two or three thousand years, perhaps, a family has been living here in Gaul. From what country did this family come ere it first settled the vast solitudes which are now so densely peopled? Probably from the recesses of Asia,* that antique cradle of the human race, now buried in the darkness of ages. This family has always preserved a character which is peculiar to itself, and is found in no other nation of the world—sincere, hospitable, generous, sprightly, gay and jesting, fond of relating and listening to stories, intrepid in battle, and braving death more heroically than any other people, because it knows, through its religion, the true nature of death. Such are the good qualities of this family. Giddy, roaming, presumptuous, inconstant, eager for novelty, more anxious to see new countries than to conquer them, making alliances as easy as breaking them, too haughty and fickle to submit or accommodate its opinion to that of its neighbors, and incapable of long acting in concert with them, although the most important common interests may be at stake; these are the faults of this family. Good and bad, such has it been for centuries, such is it to-day, and such will it be to-morrow."

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* "The swarms of the Sciltic and Celtic, or Gallic, nations, since the Celts are the first people known to have occupied Gaul, impelled by Providence toward the continent of Europe," says Jean Reynaud, "having come from the same mountains as the swarms of India and Asia, must necessarily have carried the same religious creed thither. If the worship before the same altars, in the mountains of Asia, of unknown patriarchs who became the fathers of nations, suffices to explain the general affinities which are found between the Celtic (or Gallic) swarms and these others, what difficulty is there in discovering still closer affinities between the Celtic and Hebrew races?" Whence it follows, according to Reynaud, who demonstrates it with irresistible historical and logical power, that the Hebrew, Brahminical, and Druidical religions sprung from the same stock. The Hebrews, like the Gauls, for instance, had the greatest veneration for the oak, as is proved by the oak of Shechem. As with the Gauls, unhewn stones were specially employed by the Hebrews for altars, and for other uses common to the two nations, serving, among the Gauls as well as among the Hebrews, for boundary-marks, tombs, and monuments commemorative of glorious deeds or of pledged faith. "As far as we can trace back the history of the West," says Amédée Thierry, "we find the Celtic, become the Gallic race, occupying the territory comprised between the Rhine, the Alps, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic."

"If I am not mistaken, Gauls as we all are, we are somewhat related to this family, eh?" said the brenn, laughing.

"Yes," continued the stranger, "to its own misfortune, and to the joy of the enemy, such has been and is the character of our people."

"Admit, at least, that, in spite of this character, these dear Gauls have made their way in the world; for there are few lands where these curious vagabonds, as you call them, have not set their foot, with their head erect and their sword at their side."

"You say truly; such is our spirit of adventure—always to march forward toward what is unknown, rather than stop and establish our power. And this is why one-third of Gaul is to-day in the power of the Romans, while several centuries ago the Gallic race, through its exaggerated conquests, occupied, besides Gaul, England, Ireland, Upper Italy, the right bank of the Danube, and the countries beyond the sea as far as Denmark; and even this was not thought sufficient, for it was affirmed that our race was destined to spread over the whole globe. The Gauls of the Danube went to Macedonia, Thrace, and Thessaly, while others, crossing the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, made their way to Asia Minor, founded New Gaul, and thus became arbiters of all the kings of the East."

"Thus far," said the brenn, "it seems to me that we have no reason to regret our character, which you judge so harshly."

"What remains, then, of these mad enterprises, undertaken by the pride of the kings who then reigned over Gaul? Have not these distant conquests escaped our grasp? Have not the Romans, our implacable and constantly increasing enemies, stirred up all these nations against us? Have we not been forced to abandon these useless possessions—Asia, Greece, Germany, and Italy? Such, therefore, is the fruit of so much heroism and loss of blood! This is whither the ambition of the kings who undertook to usurp the power of the Druids has led us!"

"To this, I have nothing to answer. You are right; it was not worth while to go so far to bring back on our feet nothing but the blood and dust of foreign countries. But, if I am not mistaken, it was about these times that the sons of the brave Ritha Gawr, who made himself a sagum from the beards of the kings whom he had shaven, overthrew royalty, seeing in these kings only the butchers, and not the shepherds, of the people?"

"Yes, thanks to the gods, an era of true greatness, peace and prosperity followed the sterile and bloody conquests of the kings. Rid of its useless possessions and reduced to the wide limits of its natural frontiers, the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Ocean, the Republic of Gaul was the queen and the envy of the world. Its fertile soil, cultivated as we know how to cultivate it, produced everything in abundance; its rivers were covered with merchant vessels; its mines of gold, silver and copper daily increased its wealth, and flourishing towns rose on every side. The Druids, spreading enlightenment everywhere, preached union to the provinces, and set the example thereof by convoking a solemn assembly once a year in the Chartres territory, the center of Gaul, where they discussed the general interests of the country. Each tribe, canton and city, chose their magistrates; each province was a republic, which, according to the idea of the Druids, blended with the great Republic of Gaul, and thus made a single body all-powerful by its union.*

"Our great-grandfathers beheld this happy day, friend guest!"

"And their sons beheld nothing but ruin and calamity. What was the cause? The accursed race of the dethroned kings allied themselves to the not less accursed race of their former clansmen or lords, and all, incensed at being dispossessed of their authority, hoped to regain it through public calamities, and with infamous perfidy took advantage of the inconstancy, pride and want of discipline of our character, already improved by the powerful influence of the Druids. The rivalries between the provinces, which had long slumbered, were aroused; jealousies and feuds sprang up anew in the republic, and the work of union was destroyed on all sides. The kings did not succeed, however, in again mounting the throne, and several of their descendants were executed by sentence of law; but they had unchained party spirit. Civil war was kindled; the powerful provinces attempted to subjugate the weaker ones. At the close of the last cen-

* The history of the Gallic Government presents three distinct periods:—Druidical theocracy; royalty and aristocracy; and popular constitutions based on the will of the majority as ascertained by voting. Several centuries before Christ, popular suffrage replaced the ancient privilege of inheritance. The kings and absolute chiefs were expelled, and the power placed in the hands of legislators chosen by the people. The hereditary aristocracy did not suffer themselves, however, to be dispossessed without battle; supported by the people of the rural districts, they waged a long and varying warfare against the inhabitants of the towns. The government was a sort of pure democracy, in which the people, in a body, chose either sovereign senates or magistrates and chiefs, and in which, to use the expression of one of these petty chiefs chosen by the people, the multitude had as much power over the chief as the chief over the multitude. The whole political system of Gaul was based on association; in the same manner that individual clansmen grouped round their head, petty states declared themselves under the patronage of a more powerful state, states alike powerful confederated together, and federative laws universally recognized, regulated the relations between all these states, decreed the mutual services which they were to render each other, and determined their respective rights and duties."—Amédée Thierry, *History of the Gauls.*

tury, for instance, the people of Marseilles, the descendants of those exiled Greeks to whom Gaul had generously given the ground on which their city was built, undertook to set themselves up as sovereign lords over the provinces which opposed her claims. Marseilles, threatened, summoned the Romans to her aid. They came, not to support Marseilles in her iniquity, but to take possession themselves of the country, in spite of the prodigies of valor displayed by its inhabitants. Behold the Romans settled, therefore, in Provence, where they built the town of Aix, and thus founded their first colony in our country!"

"Accursed be the men of Marseilles!" cried Joel. "It was owing to the sons of the Greeks that the Romans set foot among us."

"And by what right do you curse the men of Marseilles? Should you not equally curse those provinces who, after the decline of the Republic, suffered one of their sisters to be thus crushed and subjugated by strangers? But prompt is the punishment of evil! The Romans, encouraged by the indifference of Gaul, seized on Auvergne, then on Dauphiny, then on Languedoc and Vivarais, despite the heroic resistance of the people of these provinces, divided among themselves and left to their own strength. Behold the Romans masters, therefore, of almost all the south of Gaul, which they governed by their proconsuls; reducing the people to slavery! Were the other provinces at length alarmed by these terrible Roman invasions, which steadily advanced and threatened the heart of Gaul? No, no; confiding in their courage, they said, like you just now, Joel, 'the South is a long way from the North; the East is a long way from the West.' Nevertheless, our race, too careless and presumptuous to ward off foreign dominion while there yet is time, always has the tardy courage to rebel when the yoke weighs heavily upon it. Terrible insurrections broke out in the provinces subjected by the Romans; they were suppressed with bloodshed. Our misfortunes followed thick and fast. The Burgundians, stirred up by the descendants of the ancient kings, took up arms against the people of Franche-Comté, and invoked the aid of the Romans. Franche-Comté, unable to resist such an alliance, solicited reinforcements of the Germans on the other side of the Rhine, and thus taught these Northern barbarians the way to Gaul; but these new allies showed themselves so ferocious that, after bloody battles with the very tribes that had entreated their aid, they remained masters of Burgundy and Franche-Comté. Finally, last year, the Swiss, incited by the example of the Germans, made an irruption into the Gallic provinces conquered by the Romans. Julius Cæsar, who had been appointed proconsul, hastened from Italy, drove back the Swiss to their mountains, and, expelling the Germans from Burgundy and Franche-Comté, took possession of these provinces, exhausted by their long struggle with the barbarians, and for their oppression substituted that of the Romans—it was to us but a change of masters. At last, in the beginning of this year, a part of Gaul awakened from its stupor, feeling the danger that threatened the provinces which were still independent. Some brave patriots, desiring neither Romans nor Germans for masters—Galba among the Gauls of Belgica, and Boddignat among the Gauls of Flanders—aroused the people in a body against Cæsar. The Gauls of Vermandois and those of Artois also rose in insurrection. They marched on the Romans. Ah! a great and terrible battle was the battle of the Sambre!" cried the stranger with enthusiasm. "The whole Gallic army was drawn up awaiting Cæsar on the left bank of the river. Three times the Romans crossed it, three times they were beaten back, fighting up to their waists in water stained with blood. The Roman cavalry was broken and the veteran legions overpowered. Cæsar alighted from his horse, rallied the last cohorts of his veterans who had given way, and, sword in hand, charged our army at their head. In spite of his courage, the battle was lost to him, when suddenly we saw a fresh body of troops advancing to his aid."

"You say, 'we saw,'" said Joel; "you were present, then, at this terrible battle?"

The stranger continued, without replying: "Exhausted and decimated by seven hours' fighting, we still struggled with these fresh troops; we struggled till the last; we struggled till death. For, do you know," added the stranger, with anguish, "do you know—you who remained quietly here, while your brethren were dying for the liberty of Gaul, which is also yours—do you know how many of the *sixty thousand* combatants of the Gallic army survived this battle of the Sambre? *Five hundred!*"*

"Five hundred!" cried Joel, with a doubting air.

"I say it, because I am one of the survivors," proudly replied the traveler.

"Then those freshly-healed wounds on your face—"

"Were received in the battle of the Sambre."

At this moment, the watch-dogs outside the house were heard barking furiously, while some one knocked loudly at the outer gate of the palisade. The family of the

*In the battle of the Sambre, out of sixty thousand men, five hundred alone survived.

brenn, still under the mournful impression of the traveler's words, thought themselves on the point of being attacked; the women rose and the little children threw themselves into their arms, while the men seized the weapons suspended on the wall. The dogs, meanwhile, having ceased to bark, although the knocking was still kept up loudly, Joel said to his family, "The dogs know who it is that is knocking, for they have left off barking."

Saying these words, the brenn left the house. Several of his kinsmen and the stranger followed him, by way of precaution. The gate of the court was open, and two voices were heard shouting from the other side of the palisade, "It is we, friends, it is we! Albinik and Mikael."

By the light of the moon, indeed, the brenn's two sons were seen, with their horses, breathless and covered with foam, behind them. After tenderly embracing his sons, especially the sailor, who had been absent at sea for nearly a year, Joel entered the house with them, where they were welcomed with delight and surprise by their mother and all their family.

Albinik the sailor, and Mikael the armorer, were extremely tall and robust; they wore over their clothing a hooded cloak of coarse woolen cloth, which was dripping with rain. On entering the house, even before embracing their mother, the two new comers touched their lips to the seven twigs of mistletoe, in the copper cup on the large stone. There they spied a lifeless body, half covered with foliage, by the side of which Julyan was still seated.

"Good evening, Julyan," said Mikael. "Who is dead here?"

"It is Armel. I killed him this evening in a sword-fight," answered Julyan. "But, as we had promised to be saldunes, I am going to-morrow to rejoin him in another world. If you wish, I will speak of you to him."

"Yes, yes, Julyan, for I loved Armel, and thought to find him alive. I have, in my saddle-bag, a little harpoon iron, which I forged expressly for him; I will place it on your funeral-pile to-morrow."

"And tell Armel," added the sailor with a smile, "that he departed too soon, for his friend, Albinik, and his wife, Meroë, would have told him about their last sea-voyage."

"It will be Armel's and my turn in future to tell you beautiful stories, Albinik," replied Julyan, trustfully smiling, "for your sea-voyages will be nothing compared with those which await us in those marvelous worlds which none have seen and which all will see."

When Margarid's two sons had replied to the tender greetings of their mother and family, the brenn said to the traveler:

"Friend, these are my two children."

"May it please the gods that the haste of their arrival here is caused by no misfortune!" replied the stranger.

"I repeat the wish of our guest, my sons," said Joel. "What has happened that you arrive so late and in such haste? Welcome is your return, Albinik, but I did not think you near; where is your handsome wife, Meroë?"

"I left her at Vannes, father. I will tell you what has happened: I was returning from Spain, by the bay of Biscay, on my way to England, when to-day's bad weather forced me to enter the river of Vannes. But, by Teutates, who presides over all journeys, by land or by sea, in this and in other worlds, I did not expect to witness what I saw in the town. Leaving my ship, therefore, in the port, under the guard of the sailors, with my wife to watch them, I took a horse and galloped to Auray, when I told Mikael the news, and we both hastened thither to warn you."

"And what did you see at Vannes?"

"What did I see? All the inhabitants roused to anger and indignation, like brave Bretons as they are!"

"And what was the cause of this anger, my child?" asked Margarid, plying her distaff.

"Four Roman officers, with no other escort than a few solders, and as coolly insolent as if they had been in a land of slaves, came to Vannes yesterday, and commanded the magistrates of the town to dispatch orders to all the neighboring tribes to send ten thousand sacks of wheat to Vannes."

"Anything else, my son?" asked Joel, laughing and shrugging his shoulders.

"Five thousand sacks of oats."

"And what else?"

"Five hundred casks of hydromel."

"They would naturally want to drink," said the brenn, laughing louder than ever. "What else?"

"A thousand oxen."

"The fattest, of course. Anything more?"

"Five thousand sheep."

"That is natural; they would tire of eating beef all the time. Is that all, my children?"

"They also demanded three hundred horses to mount the Roman cavalry, and two hundred wagons of forage."

"Why not? The poor horses must be fed," returned Joel, continuing his jesting tone. "But this cannot be all; when a man begins to order, why should he stop?"

"These provisions are then to be carried by the people to Poitou and Touraine."

"Pray, what dragon's jaws are to swallow these sacks of wheat, sheep, oxen, and casks of hydromel?"

"And, above all," added the stranger, "who is to pay for these provisions?"

"Pay for them!" returned Albenik. "No one; it is a forced levy."

"Ah! ah!" said Joel.

"And the dragon that is to swallow up these provisions is the Roman army that is wintering in Touraine and Auvergne."

A shudder of anger, mingled with ironical disdain, ran through the whole family of the brenn.

"Well, Joel," resumed the traveler, "do you still think it a long way from Touraine to Brittany? The distance does not appear very great to me, since Cæsar's officers come quietly and without an escort to provision their army—their purse empty and their cudgel raised."

Joel no longer laughed; he hung his head and remained mute.

"Our guest speaks the truth," said Albenik. "Yes, these Romans came, their purse empty and their cudgel raised; for one of their officers lifted his vine-stock against the aged Ronan, the oldest of the magistrates of Vannes, who laughed aloud, like you, father, at their demands."

"Yet, my children, what else can we do than to laugh at these demands? To levy these supplies on us tribes in the neighborhood of Vannes; to force us to carry these requisitions to Touraine and Anjou, with our oxen and horses, which the Romans would then retain, and this at the moment of sowing our late crops and doing our fall work; to ruin the coming harvest, while robbing us of that of the last year, is to reduce us to the necessity of browsing on the grass which was to have fed the beasts that they had stolen."

"Yes," said Mikael the armorer, "they wish to take our wheat and cattle and to leave us naught but grass; but, by the lance which I forged this morning! the Romans themselves shall bite the dust of our fields beneath our blows."

"Vannes has this day begun its preparations for defense in case of attack," resumed the sailor. "Entrenchments have been commenced in the suburbs of the port. All our sailors are arming, and should the Roman galleys attack us by sea, never would the vultures find such a feast of corpses on the shore."

"On our way through the other tribes," said Mikael, "we have this night spread the news and given the alarm. The magistrates of Vannes have also sent out in all directions to order watch-fires to be lighted on the hills, to give notice that, from this night, a great danger threatens Brittany from one end to the other."

Mamm' Margarid, still plying her distaff, had listened to the words of her son. She said calmly:

"And what was done with the Roman officers, my children? Were they not sent back to their army, after being severely scourged?"

"No, mother, they were all thrown into prison at Vannes, save two of their soldiers, whom the magistrates dispatched to the Roman general, to tell him that no provisions would be furnished him, and that his officers would be kept as hostages."

"It would have been better to have scourged the officers and driven them in disgrace from the city," returned Mamm' Margarid. "It is thus that robbers are treated, and these Romans wished to rob us."

"You are right, Mamm' Margarid," said Joel; "they came to rob us, to starve us, to carry off our harvests and our flocks!" added Joel, with great indignation. "By the vengeance of Hesus! to take from us our beautiful team of six young oxen, and our four pairs of black bulls, each of them with such a pretty white star in the forehead!"

"And our beautiful white heifers, with tawny heads," said Mamm' Margarid, shrugging her shoulders, and continuing to ply her distaff; "and our sheep with thick fleeces! Rods, my sons! rods for these Romans!"

"And your fiery horses, bred from your proud stallion, Tom Bras," said the stranger, "after carrying your harvests and fodder to Touraine, will then serve to mount the Roman army. It is true that the fatigue will not be very great; for, perhaps, you will confess now that it is not far from Toraine to Brittany?"

"You are free to jest, friend," returned Joel; "you were right and I was wrong. Yes, yes; you spoke the truth. If all the Gallic provinces had confederated together at the first attack of the Romans—if they had made but half the efforts united which they undertook alone—we should not now be exposed to the insolent demands and threats of these Pagans. You are free to jest."

"No, Joel, I will no longer jest," replied the stranger, gravely. "The danger is close at hand; the camp of the enemy is twelve days' march distant; and the refusal of the Vannes magistrates, and imprisonment of the Roman soldiers, is war within a few days — relentless war — such as is waged by the Romans. Conquered—death on the battle-field, or slavery afar off, awaits us; for the slave-dealers follow the Roman camps, eager for the quarry. All that survive, sound or wounded, men, women, young girls, and children, are sold at auction like cattle for the benefit of the conquerors, and sent by thousands to Italy or to Roman Gaul in the South, since there is now a Roman Gaul! Then, the strong men are often forced to fight with wild beasts in the circus for the diversion of their masters; while the women, young girls, and children even—yes, children; ask Cæsar—are victims

of the most horrible debauchery. Such is the meaning of war with the Romans, if you are conquered!" exclaimed the stranger. "Will you suffer yourselves to be conquered? Will you submit to this shame? Will you surrender to them your wives, sisters, daughters, and children, Gauls of Brittany?"

Scarcely had the traveler uttered these words, when the family of Joel—men, women, young girls, and children, all, to the dwarf Rabouzigued—started up, with sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks, and exclaimed tumultuously, waving their arms, "War, war, war!" Joel's great war-dog, Deber Trud, roused by these cries, stood on his hind-feet, resting his fore-paws on the shoulder of his master, who, stroking his enormous head, said, "Yes, old Deber Trud, thou shalt hunt the Romans with our tribe; the quarry shall be thine—thy jaws shall be red with gore. At them, Deber Trud! at the Romans! at the Romans!" The dog replied to these battle-cries by growling fiercely, and showing tusks as formidable as those of the lion. The watch-dogs outside, as well as those in the stables, set up a howl in answer to Deber Trud, and the noise of the pack became frightful.

"A good omen, friend Joel," said the traveler; "your dogs howl for the enemy's death."

"Yes, yes; death to the enemy!" cried the brenn. "The gods be thanked! in Breton Gaul, in the day of peril, the watch-dog becomes the war-dog, the farm-horse the charger, the toiling ox the bearer of munitions, the harvest-wagon the chariot of war, the husbandman the warrior, and even our peaceful and fertile land, becoming a land of war, swallows up the stranger. At each step he finds a tomb in our bottomless marshes, our quicksands, and the clefts of our rocks, and his vessels are engulfed in the whirlpools of our bays, more terrible in their calm than the tempest in its fury."

"Joel," said Julyan, who had moved away from his friend's body, "I promised Armel to go to rejoin him in another world. This death will be a pleasure to me; to die fighting the Romans is a duty. What shall I do?"

"Ask one of the Druids of Karnak to-morrow, Julyan, and he will advise you."

"And what of our sister Hena?" said Albenik to his mother. "It is almost a year since I saw her, but I am certain that she is still the pearl of the Isle of Sena. My wife Meroë gave me many loving messages for her."

"Those who speak your sister's name seem to utter that of a divinity," answered Mamm' Margarid. "You will see her to-morrow."

Joel's wife rose and laid down her distaff, the signal for the family to seek repose. Mamm' Margarid then said: "Let us retire, my children; the night is far advanced. To-morrow, by daybreak, we must occupy ourselves in preparing the supplies for war, to carry with us, and to leave concealed here." Then, addressing the traveler, she said, "May the gods give you healthful repose and sweet slumbers, friend guest." She added, sighing, "I had thought to celebrate my daughter Hena's birthday to-morrow more joyously."

CHAPTER V.

Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, in fulfillment of his promise, conducts his guest to the Isle of Sena.—Julyan consults the Druids of Karnak as to whether he shall rejoin Armel or fight the Romans.—Transmission of orders forty or fifty leagues, among the Gauls, in the space of half a day.—Visit of Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sena, to her father's house.—News brought by her of three human sacrifices, to be witnessed by all the neighboring tribes, and to take place that evening at the Stones of Karnak, on the rising of the moon.—Human sacrifices.—Call to arms against the Romans.

THE next morning, at sunrise, Joel, according to his promise, launched his bark, and, accompanied by his son, Albenik the sailor, conducted the stranger to the Isle of Kellor, not daring to land on the island of Sena. The guest of the brenn having spoken in a low tone to the ewagh who was always watching on the island, the latter appeared struck with respect, and said that Taliessen, the Arch Druid, who was then at the Isle of Sena with his wife Auria, had expected the traveler the evening before.

Before leaving Joel, the stranger said to him, "Let neither yourself nor your family forget your resolutions of last evening. To-day, a call to arms will be re-echoed from one end of Breton Gaul to the other."

"Be certain that I, my kinsmen, and my tribe, will be the first to answer this call."

"I believe you. The question at stake is whether Gaul shall be enslaved, or restored to its former strength and glory."

"At the moment of quitting each other, can I not know the name of the brave man who has been seated at my fireside—the name of the sage who speaks so wisely, and who loves his country so well?"

"Joel, I call myself a soldier while Gaul remains enslaved; if ever we meet again, I shall call myself your friend, for such I am."

With these words, the stranger stepped into the boat which was to convey him from the Isle of Kellor to the Isle of Sena. Before the bark shoved off under the direction of the ewagh, Joel asked the latter whether he should wait for his daughter Hena, who was to come home on that day. The ewagh informed him that she would not come till

nightfall. The brenn, vexed at not carrying back Hena with him, returned in his boat alone with Albinik.

Toward midday, Julyan went to ask the Druids of the forest of Karnak, whether he ought to prefer seeking death in battle with the Romans, to a speedy and voluntary death, which would be a pleasure to him, since he was going to rejoin Armel. The Druids answered that, having pledged his faith as a saldune to Armel to die with him, he ought to be faithful to his promise, and that the ewaghs would go for Armel's body, in order to carry it with the usual ceremonies to the funeral-pile, where Julyan must be when the moon rose. Julyan, rejoiced at being able to see his friend so soon, was preparing to leave Karnak, when he saw the stranger who had been the guest of Joel arrive from the Isle of Sena, in company with Taliessin. The latter spoke a few words to the other Druids, who surrounded the traveler with as much eagerness as respect; the youngest among them welcoming him as a brother, and the oldest as a son. The stranger, recognizing Julyan, said:

"You are returning to the brenn of your tribe; wait a little, and I will give you a writing for him."

Julyan obeyed the wish of the stranger, who withdrew, accompanied by Taliessin and the other Druids. In a little while he returned, and gave a roll of tanned skin to the young man, saying, "This is for Joel. To-night, Julyan, when the moon rises, we shall meet again. Hesus loves those who, like you, are brave and faithful in friendship."

Julyan, on returning to the house of the brenn, learned that he had gone to the fields, to bring back the grain that was stored in the mill; he went in search of him, and gave him the stranger's writing. This writing contained these words:

"Friend Joel, in the name of Gaul, in danger, this is what the Druids of Karnak expect of thee. Command all of thy family who are at work in the fields to shout to those of their tribe who are working near them, 'The New Year Mistletoe!* Let men, women, and children all repair to Karnak forest, this evening, at the rising of the moon. Let those of the tribe who have heard these words shout them in turn to those of the other tribes who are also at work in the fields.' So that this cry, thus repeated, from neighbor to neighbor, from village to village, from city to city, from Vannes to Auray, may warn all the tribes to repair this evening to Karnak forest."

Joel did as he had been bidden by the stranger, in the name of the Druids of Karnak. The summons was repeated from neighbor to neighbor, and all the tribes, from the nearest to the most remote, were warned to repair, that evening, at the rising of the moon, to the forest of Karnak.*

While some of the men of the brenn's family hastily brought back the wheat which had been left at the mill, for the purpose of burying a portion of it in the cavities which the rest of the husbandmen dug in dry places, the women, young girls, and even the children, under the superintendence of Margarid, hastily packed up baskets of salt meats, sacks of wheat, and skins of hydromel and wine, filled chests with clothing, linen, and balsam for wounds, and cut and fitted strong canvas coverings for the wagons; for, in formidable wars, all the tribes of the country threatened by the enemy often went to meet him, instead of awaiting his coming; the houses were abandoned, the oxen employed in the fields were harnessed to the chariots of battle, containing the women, children, clothing, and provisions; the middle-aged men, mounted on horseback, composed the cavalry, and the young men, as being more active, formed an armed escort on foot. The grain was buried, and the deserted flocks strayed over the pastures without a keeper, and returned instinctively at evening to the abandoned stables; though part of them were almost always devoured by the wolves and bears. The fields were left uncultivated, and great dearths ensued. It was often the case, however, that the combatants who went in this way to the defense of their country, encouraged by their wives and children, who had naught to expect from the enemy but slavery, shame, and death, repulsed the invaders from their frontiers, and returned to repair the disasters to their fields.

Toward the close of the day, Joel, knowing that his daughter was to visit home, returned thither with his kinsmen, to aid in the preparations for the warlike journey. Hena, the virgin of the Isle of Sena, came at nightfall, as she had promised.

When the father, mother, and all the family saw Hena enter, it seemed to them that never—no, never had she been more beautiful, and her father (who writes this) had never felt so proud of his child. The long black tunic that she wore was confined at the waist by a brass belt, from which hung on one side a little golden sickle, and on the other a crescent, representing the

* This Druidical rallying cry, "The New Year Mistletoe!" is still shouted through the streets on New Year's Day by the poor children in some of the provinces.

* With respect to this singular method of oral telegraphing, if we may use the expression, Cæsar says, "The Gallic peasants, at work in the fields, communicated important news by shouting it to each other; it thus went from burgh to burgh, and from city to city, as fast as sound could travel. An event occurring at Genabum (Orleans) at sunrise, in the shortest days of the year, was known among the Averni (the Gauls of Auvergne), a hundred and sixty miles distant, before the end of the night."

moon in its wane. Hena had wished to adorn herself to do honor to her birthday. A gold necklace and bracelets of filagree work, set with garnets, adorned her arms and neck, which were whiter than snow; on taking off her hooded cloak, she displayed a wreath of green oak-leaves, like those worn in religious ceremonies, on her fair hair, which was braided around her pure, smooth brow. The azure depths of the sea, in the calm of a serene sky, were not purer than the blue eyes of Hena.

The brenn extended his arms to his daughter. She rushed into them joyfully, and offered her forehead to him to kiss, as well as to her mother, Margarid. The children of the family, who worshiped Hena, crowded round her and disputed with each other the honor of kissing her beautiful hands; and even old Deber Trud frisked about as well as he could to welcome the coming of his new mistress.

Hena offered her forehead to Albinik the sailor to kiss, next after her father and mother; she had not seen her brother for a long time. Guilhern and Mikael next had their turn, as well as the swarm of children, whom she encircled altogether in her arms, stooping to a level with them to kiss them. She then gave a tender sisterly greeting to Henory, the wife of Guilhern, regretting that Meroë, Albinik's wife was not there. Her other relatives were not forgotten—all, even to Rabouzigued, the butt of everybody, had a friendly word from her. Then, delighted to find herself amidst her family, in the house where she had been born eighteen years before, Hena seated herself at her mother's feet, on the cricket on which she had always sat as a child. On seeing her daughter thus at her feet, Mamm' Margarid pointed to the disorder which prevailed in the room, on account of the preparations for war, and said, sorrowfully:

"We expected to pass this day, the anniversary of your birth, in peace and rejoicing, my dear daughter; and behold! you find confusion and alarm in this house, soon to be deserted, for we are threatened by war."

"My mother speaks truly," replied Hena, sighing. "The wrath of Hesus is great."

"Tell us, thou who art a saint—a saint of the Isle of Sena—tell us, dear child," said Joel, "what we must do to appease the anger of the all-powerful god!"

"My father and mother do me too much honor in calling me a saint," replied the young maiden. "Like the Druids, I and my companions meditate at night under the shade of the sacred oaks at the rising of the moon. We seek the simplest and most divine precepts in order to spread the knowledge of them among our fellows;* we adore the all-powerful god in his works, from the lofty oak, which is consecrated to him, to the humblest mosses on the black rocks of our isle; from the stars, whose eternal march we study,* to the insect which lives and dies in a day; from the boundless sea to the tiny brooklet that trickles among the grass. We seek the cure of the maladies that cause men to suffer, and we glorify our fathers and mothers who have rendered Gaul illustrious. By the science of auguries and the study of the past, we strive to foresee the future in order to enlighten those less clear-sighted than ourselves. Like the Druids, lastly, we instruct the youth and inspire them with an ardent love for our beloved and common country, to-day so terribly menaced by the anger of Hesus, because the Gauls have too long forgotten that they are all sons of the same God, and that a brother should feel the wounds of a brother."

"The stranger who was our guest, and whom I conducted this morning to the Isle of Sena, said the same, my dear daughter."

"My mother and father may hold sacred the words of the Chief of the Hundred Valleys. Hesus and the love of Gaul inspire him."

"He the chief of a hundred valleys! He must be very powerful, then," said Joel. "He refused to tell me his name. Do you know him, my dear daughter? Of what province is he?"

"He was impatiently expected last evening at the Isle of Sena by the venerable Taliessin. As to the name of this traveler, all that I am at liberty to tell my father and mother is, that on the day that our country is subjugated, the Chief of the Hundred Valleys will have shed the last drop of his generous blood. May the wrath of Hesus spare us this terrible day!"

"Alas! my daughter, if Hesus is incensed, by what means shall we appease him?"

"By following his law, which says, 'All men are sons of the same God;' and also by offering human sacrifices to him. May those of this night appease his anger!"

"This night's sacrifices! Whom?" asked the brenn.

"Do not my father and mother know that to-night, at the rising of the moon, three human sacrifices will be offered at the Stones of Karnak?"

"We know," returned Joel, "that all the tribes are summoned to repair this evening to Karnak forest; but who are these sacrifices that will be acceptable to Hesus, beloved daughter?"

* Diogenes Laertes quotes these beautiful maxims, borrowed from the Druidical philosophy: "Obey the laws of God. Do good to men. Endure the accidents of life with courage."

* The science of astronomy was a special study among the Druids.

"First, that of Daoulas, the murderer, who killed the defenseless Hoüarne in his sleep. The Druids have sentenced him to die this evening.* The blood of a cowardly murderer is an acceptable expiation to Hesus."

"And the second sacrifice?"

"Our kinsman, Julyan, desires, through sworn friendship, to rejoin Armel, whom he slew in honorable combat through excess of valor. To-night, glorified by the song of the bards, he will go, according to his vow, to meet Armel in the unknown worlds. The blood that a brave man offers voluntarily to Hesus is pleasing to him."

"And the third sacrifice, my beloved child," said Mamm' Margarid; "who is the third sacrifice?"

Hena did not reply. She laid her fair young head on Margarid's lap, and, after musing for a few moments, kissed her mother's hands, and said to her, with a gentle smile, "How many times little Hena has slept thus on your lap, my mother, at evening, while you plied your distaff, and all you who are here, with Armel, who is away, were gathered around the hearth, talking of the heroic virtues of our fathers and mothers in days gone by!"

"It is true, my darling daughter," replied Margarid, passing her hand caressingly over her child's fair hair, "it is true; and all here loved you so much for your good heart and childish grace, that, on seeing you asleep on my lap, they talked in a low tone, for fear of awakening you."

Rabouzigued, who was there among the other members of the family, broke forth: "But who is this third human sacrifice, that is to appease Hesus and deliver us from war? Who is it, Hena, that is to be sacrificed this evening?"

"I will tell you, Rabouzigued, when I have reflected a little longer on days gone by," replied the young girl, in a dreamy manner, without quitting her mother's lap; then, passing her hand across her brow, as if to collect her thoughts, she looked around, pointed to the stone upon which was the copper basin with the seven twigs of mistletoe, and resumed:

"And when I was twelve years old, do my father and mother remember how happy I was at being chosen by the Druidesses of the Isle of Sena to receive, in a linen vail, bleached in the night-dews, the mistletoe cut at the full moon with a golden knife by the Druids? Do my father and mother remember how I was brought back by the ewaghs in a chariot adorned with flowers and foliage, with mistletoe to sanctify our house, while the bards chanted the glory of Hesus? What tender embraces all the family lavished on me upon my return! What rejoicings were there in the tribe!"

"Dear, dear daughter," said Margarid, pressing Hena's head to her breast; "if the Druidesses chose you to receive the sacred mistletoe in a linen vail, it was because your soul was as white as the vail!"

"It was because little Hena was the most learned, the best, and the gentlest among her companions," added Albinik the sailor, looking tenderly at his sister.

"It was because little Hena was the bravest among her companions, for she nearly perished in saving Janed, the daughter of Wor, who had fallen into the sea while gathering shells on the rocks of Glen Hek Bay, and had been already swept away by the waves," said Mikael the armorer, looking lovingly at Hena.

"It was because little Hena was gentle, patient, and kind above all others to children; when scarcely twelve years old, she taught them already in the college of the Druidesses, on the Isle of Sena, like a little matron," said Guilhern the husbandman, in turn.

The daughter of Joel blushed with modesty on hearing these words of her mother and brothers; when Rabouzigued said again:

"But who is this third human sacrifice that is to appease Hesus and deliver us from war? Who is it, Hena, that is to be sacrificed this evening?"

"I will tell you, Rabouzigued," replied the young girl, rising, "when I have once more seen the little chamber where I used

* The human sacrifices, for which such reproach has been cast on the Druids, were composed of those sentenced to death by the law, and those who offered themselves up voluntarily. As to the latter, Christians cannot dispute their grandeur, for the crucified Christ, offering his blood to God the Father for the redemption of the world, is the highest type of voluntary sacrifice. "Trial for murder," says Strabo, "is under the special jurisdiction of the Druids." Diodorus Siculus adds: "After keeping the criminals in prison, the Druids hang them on gibbets, in honor of the gods, or place them on funeral-piles with other offerings." Cæsar says: "The Druids are persuaded that the most acceptable sacrifices to the gods are criminals taken in robbery, murder, or other crimes." Lastly, we will quote the eloquent words of Reynaud: "In short, the principal difference between capital punishment among the Druids and our own is, that the former was the sentence of religious as well as of civil law. Without approving of this custom of our forefathers, since it is a sort of cowardice to rid ourselves of criminals instead of reforming them, I do not hesitate to say, that, of the two spectacles, that of the Druid himself restoring the condemned criminal to God, as an offering of expiation, in the midst of a praying assembly, is less abominable than that of the executioner of our days, a mercenary without compassion or piety, brutally seizing the criminal to slaughter him on the stage, in the guise of a police demonstration." Besides the voluntary and the expiatory sacrifices, the Druids, like the Hebrews, several centuries before Christ, sometimes devoted the enemies of their nation to their gods, making burnt offerings of them after the victory, on the field of battle. The formula of the anathema was almost precisely similar to that employed by the Hebrews. On reading of the scenes of extermination in Canaan, we can almost believe ourselves among the Gauls of remote ages. The sacrifice embraced everything—men and animals—and the burning of the booty accompanied the blood-offering as incense. Compare the taking of Amalek or of Jericho with a Gallic holocaust. "They utterly destroyed," says Joshua, "all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and ass, with the edge of the sword. And they burnt the city with fire."

to sleep when, grown to a young girl, I came from the Isle of Sena to join in our family holidays."

Then, walking to the door of the chamber, she paused a moment on the threshold, and said:

"What sweet nights I have passed here, after retiring for the evening with regret from among you; and with what impatience I rose to behold you again in the morning!" And, entering the little chamber, while her family marveled more and more that so young a girl as Hena should dwell so much on the past, she resumed, looking with pleasure at several articles arranged on a table:

"Here are the shell necklaces which I made during the evenings by my mother's side! Here are the dried varechs, looking like little trees, which I gathered on our rocks! Here is the net with which I amused myself by catching crabs at low tide on the sands! Here, also, are the rolls of white parchment on which, every time I came here, I inscribed my happiness at again beholding my friends and the house where I was born. I am glad that I have amassed all these girlish treasures."

Rabouzigued, however, who did not seem affected by these memories, said again, in his shrill, impatient voice:

"But who is the third human sacrifice that is to appease Hesus and deliver us from war? Who is it, Hena, that is to be sacrificed this evening?"

"I will tell you, Rabouzigued," replied Hena, smiling, "when I have distributed my little, girlish treasures among you all, and to you, too, Rabouzigued."

With these words, the daughter of the brenn made a sign for her family to enter the room, and, greatly to their surprise, gave to each of them a token of remembrance. All, even to the children who loved her so dearly, and also to Rabouzigued, received something; for she separated the shell necklaces and divided the dried varechs, saying to each one in her gentle voice, "Keep this, I pray you, in remembrance of your friend and relative, Hena."

Joel, his wife and his three sons, to whom Hena had as yet given nothing, looked at each other with the more surprise at what she was doing, inasmuch as toward the end they saw tears in her eyes, though she did not appear sad. She then unfastened the garnet necklace from her throat, and offered it to Margarid, saying, as she kissed her hand:

"Hena entreats her mother to keep this for her sake."

She then took the little rolls of white parchment prepared for writing, gave them to Joel, kissed his hand also, and said:

"Hena entreats her father to keep these in remembrance of her; he will find her most cherished thoughts therein."

Then, unfastening from her arms her two garnet bracelets, Hena said to the wife of her brother Guilhern the husbandman:

"Hena entreats her sister Henory to wear this bracelet for her sake."

She then gave the other bracelet to her brother, the sailor, saying:

"Let your wife Meroë, whom I love so much for her courage and noble heart, keep this bracelet in remembrance of me."

Then taking from her brass belt the little sickle and the golden crescent which were suspended therefrom, Hena offered the first to Guilhern the husbandman, and the second to Albinik the sailor, after which she took a ring from her finger and gave it to Mikael the armorer, saying:

"Let my brothers keep these in memory of their sister Hena."

All stood in astonishment, holding in their hand what the virgin of the Isle of Sena had just given them—all stood in astonishment, unable to utter a word, and looking anxiously at each other, as if threatened by some unknown danger.

Hena then turned to Rabouzigued, and said:

"Now, Rabouzigued, I will tell you who will be the third sacrifice this evening."

She gently took Joel and Margarid by the hand, led them back to the large room, and said:

"My father and mother know that the blood of a cowardly murderer is an acceptable offering of expiation to Hesus, and one likely to appease him."

"Yes, you have just told us so, darling child."

"They also know that the blood of a brave man, who dies for the sake of friendship, is a heroic offering to Hesus, and one which may appease his wrath."

"Yes, you have just now assured us of this."

"My father and mother know, lastly, that the offering of all others most acceptable to Hesus and most likely to appease him is the innocent blood of a virgin who is proud and happy to offer her blood to Hesus, freely and voluntarily, in the hope that this all-powerful god will deliver from foreign oppression our beloved country, the dear and holy country of our fathers. The innocent blood of a virgin will flow, therefore, this evening, to appease the wrath of Hesus."

"And what is her name—tell us the name of this virgin who is to deliver us from war?" said Rabouzigued.

Hena, looking at her father and mother with tenderness and serenity, replied, "This virgin who is to die is one of the nine Druidesses of the Isle of Sena; her name is Hena; she is the daughter of Margarid and Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak!"

A deep and gloomy silence fell upon the

family of Joel. No one—no one expected to see Hena depart so soon for another sphere; neither father, nor mother, nor brothers, nor kinsmen, were prepared for this sudden journey.

"What, go already, our Hena! what, leave us so soon!" were the exclamations that rose on all sides.

The father and mother looked at each other, sighing. Margarid said to Hena, "Joel and Margarid had expected to await the coming of their beloved daughter in those unknown worlds where we shall live again and meet those whom we had loved here below; but, on the contrary, our Hena goes before us."

"And perhaps our dear, gentle child will not have to wait for us long," said Joel.

"May her blood, as innocent and pure as that of a lamb, appease the wrath of Hesus," added Margarid, "and may we soon go to tell our beloved child that Gaul is freed from its invaders."

"The memory of our daughter's heroic sacrifice will be perpetuated in our race," said the father. "As long as the descendants of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, exist, they will be proud of numbering among their ancestors Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sena."

The young girl made no reply. She gazed at her mother, father and all her relatives with tender eagerness, as at the moment of setting out on a journey we gaze longingly for the last time on the beloved ones from whom we are to be parted.

Rabouzigued, then pointing through the open door to the full moon, which was rising like a globe of fire through the distant mist of evening, said, "Hena, Hena, the moon is appearing in the horizon."

"You are right, Rabouzigued, the time has come!" she answered, regretfully withdrawing her gaze from that of her friends. She added, "Let my father, my mother, my family and all my tribe accompany me to the sacred stones of Karnak forest. This is the hour for the sacrifice."

And Hena, walking between Joel and Margarid, and followed by her family and all her tribe, repaired to Karnak forest.

The summons to the tribes, spreading from mouth to mouth, from village to village, and from city to city, had been heard throughout Breton Gaul. The tribes repaired in a body to Karnak forest—men, women, and children, as well as Joel and his friends.

The moon, this night at its full, shone resplendent in the firmament amidst the stars. The tribes, after marching long through the thickets and clearings of the forests, at length arrived on the seashore. There rose in nine long avenues the sacred stones of Karnak*—those holy stones, the gigantic pillars of a temple with the heavens for its arch. In proportion as the tribes approached this place, their thoughtfulness redoubled. At the end of the avenues, the other stones of the sacrificial altar were ranged in a semicircle on the shore, so as to have behind them the deep forest, in front of them the boundless ocean, and above them the starry firmament.

The tribes halted at the last avenues of Karnak, leaving a wide space between the multitude and the altar. A solemn silence fell on the vast crowd.

The funeral-piles were erected in front of the sacrificial stones. The middle one, which was the largest, was adorned with long white vails, striped with purple, and was also decorated with branches of ash, fir, oak and birch, arranged in a mystic order. The funeral-pile on the right, which was less elevated, was also adorned with various kinds of foliage and sheaves of wheat. Thereon the body of Armel, killed in honorable combat, was stretched, half concealed by apple-tree branches, laden with fruit. The funeral-pile at the left was surmounted by a wicker-work cage, representing a human figure of gigantic stature.

The sound of cymbals and harps was soon heard in the distance. The Druids, Druidesses, and virgins of the Isle of Sena arrived at the place of sacrifice. First came the bards, clad in long white tunics, confined by brass belts; their brows were crowned with oak-leaves, and they chanted on their harps the praises of God, Gaul, and its heroes. Next came the ewaghs, having charge of the sacrifices; they carried torches and axes, and led in chains Daoulas, the murderer, destined to punishment. Then followed the Druids, dressed in trailing white robes, striped with purple, their foreheads crowned with oak-leaves. Among them

*The forest of Karnak, now destroyed, extended at that time to the seashore; as to the Druidical stones, which are still in existence, we quote Ogée's description in the Dictionary of Brittany: "Carnac is situated on the coast, five and a half leagues west-southwest of Vannes; its bishopric is twenty-five and a half leagues from Rennes, and two and a half leagues from Auray. On the coast, south of Morbihan, and close by the hamlet of Carnac, are those marvelous stones of which so much has been written by antiquarians; they occupy the highest ground fronting the sea from this hamlet to Trinity Bay, a distance of forty-five hundred feet in length; they are set up in quincunxes like avenues of trees, and form species of streets laid out by rule. The first of these streets, beginning on the Karnak side, is forty feet in width; the second, thirty-six feet; the third, forty feet; the fourth, forty-two feet; the fifth and sixth, thirty-six feet each; the seventh, twenty-two feet; the eighth, twenty-three feet; the ninth, twenty-six feet; and the tenth, fourteen feet. These stones are of different sizes, and are placed eighteen, twenty and twenty-five feet apart; some are no larger than ordinary mile-stones, while others, especially those at the extremity of the avenues, are of prodigious size, being sixteen, eighteen, and even fifty feet high, and of enormous weight. The most surprising thing is, that they are much larger at the top than at the bottom, so that many of them vibrate as if set on a pivot; all are unhewn, just as they were taken from the quarry."

marched Julyan, proud and happy—Julyan, who wished to quit this world to rejoin Armel, and to travel with him in unknown spheres. Lastly came the married Druidesses, clad in white tunics and golden belts, and the nine virgins of the Isle of Sena, with their black tunics, confined by brass belts, their bare arms, their leafy crowns, and their golden harps. Hena walked in front of her sisters; her eyes and smile sought her father, mother and kindred. Joel, Margarid, and their family were in the foremost row; their eyes met their daughter's, and their heart went out toward her.

The Druids ranged themselves around the sacrificial stones. The bards ceased their songs. One of the ewaghs then announced to the assembled crowd that those who wished to send remembrances to their loved ones who had departed, could place their letters and offerings on the funeral-piles. Upon this, many relatives and friends of those who had long been traveling elsewhere, piously approached the funeral-piles and deposited thereon letters, flowers, and other mementoes, destined to live again in another world, as the souls whose bodies were about to dissolve in brilliant flames would put on a new covering elsewhere.*

But no one—no one laid anything on the funeral-pile of the murderer. Daoulas was as dejected and terrified as Julyan was proud and smiling. Julyan had everything to hope from the continuance of a life that had always been pure and just. The murderer had everything to dread from the continuance of a life polluted by crime. When the commissions for the dead had been deposited, a deep silence ensued.

The ewaghs, leading Daoulas, loaded with chains, dragged him to the wicker cage representing a human figure of gigantic stature. Despite the cries and terror of the condemned, they placed him bound at the foot of the funeral-pile, and stood by him, torch in hand. Taliessin, the Arch Druid, an old man with a long white beard, then made a sign to one of the bards. The latter struck his three-stringed harp, and sang the following words, after pointing out the murderer to the crowd:

"Behold Daoulas, of the tribe of Morlech. He slew Hoüarne, of the same tribe. Did he slay him like a brave man, face to face, with equal weapons? No. Daoulas slew him like a coward. At midday, as Hoüarne was sleeping in the fields, under a tree, Daoulas came on tip-toe, with his axe in his hand, and slew his victim with one blow. Little Erik, of the same tribe, was in a tree near by, gathering apples; he saw the murder and recognized the assassin. On the evening of the same day, the ewaghs went and seized Daoulas in his tribe. He was taken before the Druids of Karnak, and confronted with little Erik, when he confessed his crime.

"The Arch Druid then spoke:

"'In the name of Hesus, the omnipotent, and in the name of Teutates, who presides over travelers in this and other worlds, listen: the expiatory blood of the murderer is acceptable to Hesus. Thou shalt go to live again in other worlds. Thy new life will be terrible, because thou hast been cruel and cowardly. If thou continuest in the next life to be cruel and cowardly, thou wilt die, to be born again elsewhere still more unhappy; and so on, through all eternity. But if, on the contrary, thou becomest brave and good at thy new birth, despite the sufferings which thou wilt endure, thou wilt die, to be born again happier elsewhere; and so on, through all eternity.'"*

The bard then addressed the murderer, who, loaded with chains, was uttering cries of terror. "Thus spoke the venerated Druid: 'Daoulas, thou art about to die, and meet thy victim in another world. He is awaiting you—he is awaiting you!'"

At these words of the bard, the multitude shuddered with horror at the thought that the murderer would find the man whom he had killed, alive in another world. The bard continued, turning toward the funeral-pile, "Daoulas, thou art about to die. It is glorious to see the faces of the just and brave at the moment when they quit this world voluntarily, for holy causes; they love, at the moment of their departure, to meet the tender farewell gaze of their kindred and friends; but cowards like thee, Daoulas, are unworthy to look for the last time on the assembly of the just and to be seen by them. For this reason, Daoulas, thou wilt die, and be burned, hidden from view in this wicker covering, the semblance of a man, as thou hast been naught but the

* The Gauls, like the Greeks, burned the dead, preferring, with reason, this volatilization of matter by fire to those repugnant charnel-houses, called cemeteries, which, in the course of time, encroach on the space destined for the living. Contrary to the Greeks, however, the Gauls, much less solicitous about matter or what recalled the memory thereof, did not preserve the ashes. If they paid less heed to the ashes, it was because they thought more of the soul.

* "The Druids divided all existence into three circles: The first, the circle of immensity, or of the infinite, belonged to God alone; the second, the circle of felicity, or Paradise, comprised those beings who had attained to a high order of sanctity; the third, the circle of voyages, embraced the whole order of nature. It was in this, at the bottom of chaos, in the great ocean of space, that man first drew breath. The power was soon given him of choosing between good and evil, and he was long subjected to trials of this kind, quitting one by death and being born again to another, till he finally attained the equilibrium between duties and passions, when he finally quitted the circle of voyages, or ordeals, to take his place in that of felicity. There was no hell; the degraded or wicked soul relapsed into an inferior and more or less unhappy state of existence; there were torments enough in the vast circle of humanity to dispense with a separate place of punishment."—*Jean Reynaud.*

semblance of a man since thy crime." The bard then cried, "In the name of Hesus, and in the name of Teutates, glory, glory to the brave! Shame, shame to cowards!" And all the bards, striking their harps and cymbals, exclaimed in chorus, "Glory, glory to the brave! Shame, shame to cowards!"

An ewagh raised the sacred knife, and, cutting short the life of the murderer, flung his body into the gigantic image. The funeral-pile kindled, the harps and cymbals sounded, and all the tribes shouted the last words of the bard, "Shame, shame to the coward!" The funeral-pile of the murderer was soon a mass of flames, in which the human form appeared for a moment like a fiery giant, and the fire cast its light afar, on the summit of the tall oaks of the forest, the colossal stones of Karnak, and the boundless ocean, while the moon inundated the scene with her celestial light. In a few moments, naught remained of the funeral-pile of Daoulas but a heap of ashes.

Julyan then joyfully mounted the pile on which the body of Armel, his friend and saldune, was extended. He was dressed in his holiday attire; his fine blue and white striped sagum was confined by an embroidered leather belt, from which hung a large knife; his brown woolen cloak was clasped on his left shoulder, and a wreath of oak-leaves adorned his manly brow. He held in his hand a bunch of vervain. His face was resolute and serene. Scarcely had he mounted the funeral-pile, when the harps and cymbals sounded, and the bards sang, "Who is this? It is Julyan, the husbandman—Julyan, of the family of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak. He fears the gods, and all love him; he is good, industrious, and brave. He slew Armel, not through hatred, for he loved him, but through excess of valor, in honorable combat, with buckler on arm and sword in hand, like a true Breton Gaul who loves to show his bravery, and does not fear death. Armel having departed, Julyan, who was his sworn saldune, wishes to go to rejoin his friend. Glory to Julyan! Faithful to the teachings of the Druids, he knows that the creatures of the Almighty never die, and he offers his pure and noble blood to Hesus. Glory to Julyan! He has been good, just, and brave. He is about to be born again, better, more just, and braver; and so on, through all eternity, from world to world, Julyan will be born again, his soul putting on a new body in every new life, as the body puts on new raiment on this earth.

"O Gauls! proud souls, in whose sight there is no such thing as death! come, come! detach your eyes from earth, and mount to the sublimity of heaven! See at your feet the abysses of space, threaded by those processions of immortals, like us all, that Teutates guides unceasingly from the worlds where they have lived to those where they are to be born anew. Oh! what marvelous, strange countries through which to journey with the friends who have gone before us, and with those who will come after us!

"No, we are not mortal; our infinite life is counted by thousands and thousands of centuries, as the stars of the firmament are counted by thousands and thousands—mysterious worlds, always new and always varied, which we are to inhabit in turn. Let those fear death who, faithful to the false gods of the Greeks and Romans, believe that we live but once, and that then, divested of its body, the happy or unhappy soul remains eternally in the same hell or the same paradise! Yes, they may well dread death who believe that on quitting this life they are stationary for all eternity!

"We Gauls have the true knowledge of God. We have the secret of death—man is immortal both in body and soul. Our destiny, in our journey from world to world, is to see and to know, in order that in each one of his journeys, the man who has been wicked may become purified and grow better, and the man who has been good may become still more righteous; and that thus, from one new birth to another, we may rise unceasingly toward a perfection as infinite as our life.

"Happy, then, are the brave men who voluntarily quit this earth for other countries, where they will constantly behold new and marvelous things in company with those they love! Happy, happy is the brave Julyan! He goes to rejoin his friend, and to see and know with him what none of us have seen and known, but what we all shall see and know. Happy Julyan! Glory to Julyan!"

All the bards and all the Druids, Druidesses, and virgins of the Isle of Sena, repeated in chorus, to the sound of the harps and cymbals, "Happy, happy Julyan! Glory, glory to Julyan!" And all the tribes, thrilled with a sensation of curiosity to know death, in order the sooner to explore the unknown mysteries of other worlds, repeated, with a thousand voices, "Happy, happy Julyan!"

Then Julyan, radiant, standing on the funeral-pile, with the corpse of Armel at his feet, raised his inspired looks toward the bright moon, opened the bosom of his sagum, drew his long knife, extended toward heaven the bunch of vervain which he held in his left hand, and with his right hand firmly plunged the knife into his breast, crying with a resolute voice, "Happy, happy that I am, I go to rejoin Armel!"

The funeral-pile was instantly kindled.

Julyan raised the bunch of vervain for the last time toward the sky, and disappeared amidst the dazzling flames, while the song of the bards and the sound of the harps and cymbals resounded afar.

A vast number of men and women belonging to the different tribes, in their impatience and curiosity to see and know the mysteries of other worlds, rushed toward the funeral-pile of Julyan, in order to go with him and to offer to Hesus an immense hecatomb of their bodies. But Taliessin, the Arch Druid, ordered the ewaghs to force back these enthusiasts, and cried, "Enough blood has flowed, without that which is yet to flow; the time has come when Gallic blood should flow only for liberty; and blood shed for liberty is also an acceptable offering to Hesus!"

The ewaghs prevented, though not without great difficulty, these voluntary human sacrifices. The funeral-pile of Julyan and Armel continued to burn till nothing remained of it but a heap of ashes.

A great silence fell upon the assembled tribes. Hena, the virgin of the Isle of Sena, mounted the third funeral-pile.

Joel and Margarid, their three sons—Guilhern, Albinik, and Mikael—with their wives and little children who loved Hena so well, their kindred, and all their tribe, by whom she was also beloved—pressed close together, saying, "See Hena! see our Hena!"

When the virgin of the Isle of Sena stood erect on the funeral-pile, adorned with white vails, flowers, and foliage, the assembled tribes cried, with one voice, "How beautiful she is! How saintly she is!"

Joel writes this with sincerity. His daughter Hena was very beautiful, thus standing on the funeral-pile, illumined from head to foot by the soft light of the moon, with her black tunic, her fair hair, crowned with green leaves, and her round arms—whiter than ivory—resting on her golden harp.

The bards were silent.

The virgin of the Isle of Sena sang in a voice as pure as her soul:

"The daughter of Joel and Margarid comes with joy to sacrifice to Hesus;
"O thou all-powerful god! deliver the land of our fathers from the invader!
"Gauls of Brittany, you have the lance and the sword:
"The daughter of Joel and Margarid has naught but her blood; she offers it voluntarily to Hesus!
"O all-powerful God! make the Gallic lance and sword invincible!
"O Hesus! take my blood; it is thine; save our holy country!"

The eldest of the Druidesses stood on the funeral-pile, behind Hena, with the sacred knife in her hand. When Hena's song was finished, the knife flashed in the air, and fell on the virgin of the Isle of Sena.

Her mother, her brothers, all her tribe, and Joel, her father, saw Hena fall on her knees, cross her hands on her breast, turn her face toward the moon, and cry with a firm voice:

"Hesus, Hesus, by this blood which flows, mercy for Gaul! Gauls, by this blood which flows, victory to our arms!"

The sacrifice of Hena was thus accomplished, amidst the religious admiration of the tribes. All repeated, "Hesus! mercy for Gaul! Gauls! victory to our arms!"

Several young men, roused to enthusiasm by the heroic example and the beauty of Hena, sought to kill themselves on her funeral-pile, in order to be born anew with her. The ewaghs drove them back, and the flames quickly enveloped the pile. Hena disappeared amidst dazzling splendor. In a few moments, naught remained of the virgin and the pile but a heap of ashes. A fierce gust of wind suddenly blew from the sea, and scattered these atoms far and wide. The virgin of the Isle of Sena, as brilliant and pure as the flames that had consumed her, had vanished in air, to revive in another world, and await the coming of those she loved.

The cymbals and harps resounded anew, and the chief of the bards sang, "To arms, Gauls! to arms! The innocent blood of a virgin has flowed for you; shall not yours flow for the country? To arms! behold the Romans! Strike, Gauls! strike the Roman to the earth. Behold the blood of the enemy flowing like a river; it flows knee-deep: courage! strike hard! strike harder yet! It flows like a lake; it rises breast-high: courage, Gauls! strike still harder, strike the Roman to the earth! strike still harder! thou canst rest to-morrow. To-morrow, Gaul will be free; to-day, let there be but one cry from the Seine to the ocean—To arms! to arms!"

All the tribes, carried away by this warlike ardor, dispersed and rushed to arms. The moon had disappeared, and darkness had fallen upon the earth, but from the recesses of the forests, from the depths of the valleys, and from the top of the hills where the signal-fires were burning, a thousand voices repeated the song of the bard, "To arms! Strike, Gauls, strike the Roman! To arms!"

This true narrative of all that took place in our humble house, on the anniversary of the birth of my glorious daughter, Hena, the day which also witnessed her heroic sacrifice, has been written by me, Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, in the last moon of October, of the first year that Julius Cæsar fought in Gaul. After my death, my eldest son, Guilhern, will religiously keep this narrative, and after Guilhern, the sons of his sons will transmit it from generation to generation, in order that our family may forever preserve the memory of Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sena.

THE BRASS BELL;

OR,

The Chariot of Death.

B.C. 56—40.

CHAPTER I.

Albinik the sailor and his wife Meroë, in sailor's costume, set out alone from the Gallic camp, to brave the lion in his den.—Their journey.—They witness a spectacle such as none had ever before seen, or would evermore behold.—Their arrival at Cæsar's camp.—Crucifixion of the five pilots.—Cæsar at supper.—The examination.—The young Moorish slave.—The mutilated deserter.—The ordeal.—Cæsar's hospitality.—Separation of Albinik and Meroë.—Meroë alone in the tent.

ALBINIK the sailor, the son of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, and Meroë, Albinik's dear and well-beloved wife, witnessed a spectacle, during a night and a day, at which they still shudder.

Such a spectacle none had ever before seen, or will evermore behold.

The summons to arms of the Druids of Karnak forest and the Chief of the Hundred Valleys had been heard. The sacrifice of Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sena, seemed acceptable to Hesus, since all the inhabitants of Brittany, from the north to the south, and from the east to the west, had risen to oppose the Romans. The tribes of the territories of Vannes and Auray, with those of the mountains of Ares, and others beside, had assembled at the town of Vannes, on the left bank and almost at the mouth of the river that empties into the great Morbihan Bay. This formidable position, situated ten leagues from Karnak, and where all the Gallic forces were to meet, was chosen by the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, who had been elected commander-in-chief of the army.

The tribes, leaving behind them their fields, flocks, and houses, had assembled—men, women, children, and old men—and encamped round the town of Vannes, where Joel, with his family and tribe, were also found. Albinik the sailor, as well as his wife Meroë, left the camp toward sunset, to set out on a long journey. Since her marriage with Albinik (he is proud to say), Meroë had always been his companion in his perils by sea and by land. Like him, on the ship, she wore a sailor's dress; like him, in case of need, she could take her place at the helm, or handle the oar or axe, for her heart was brave and her arm strong.

On that evening, before quitting the Gallic army, Meroë had put on her sailor costume—a short brown woolen sagum, confined by a leather belt, full white linen braga, which fell beneath the knee, and seal-skin gaiters. Her short, hooded mantle was thrown across her left shoulder, and her flowing hair was covered by a leather cap. From her resolute air, the agility of her step, and the regularity of her fine and noble features, she would have been taken for a young lad whose beauty might win the heart of a maiden. Albinik also was dressed as a sailor. He carried on his shoulder a wallet containing provisions for the journey, and the flowing sleeve of his sagum showed his left arm bandaged to the elbow in a bloody cloth.

The husband and wife had just quitted the suburbs of Vannes, when Albinik stopped, sad and deeply moved, and said to his wife, "Meroë, let me accomplish alone this journey and undertaking, compared with which a fierce combat would be child's play. Return to my father and mother, who are yours also."

"Albinik, you should have waited for the darkness of night to tell me this; you would not have seen me blush for shame at the thought that you believe me a coward." With these words, the young woman hastened her steps, instead of turning back.

"Let it be as your courage and love for me desire," said her husband. "May Hena, my sainted sister, who is elsewhere, intercede with Hesus for your safety!"

Both pursued their journey through a steep road, which led to and wound its way over the summits of a chain of high hills. The travelers thus overlooked a succession of deep and fertile valleys. As far as the eye could reach, they saw here villages, there market-towns, elsewhere isolated farms, and, farther on, a flourishing city, traversed by the arm of a river, wherein large vessels, laden with sheaves of wheat, casks of wine, and hay, were anchored here and there.

But, strange to say, though the sky was serene, none of the great herds of cattle were seen in the pastures, which usually fed there till nightfall; neither were any husbandmen visible in the fields, though it

was the hour when all the foot-paths and roads were usually swarming with country people returning to their homes, for the sun was rapidly sinking. This country, of late so populous, seemed deserted.

The husband and wife paused, pensively contemplating these fertile lands, this wealth of nature, this opulent city, and these hamlets and houses. Then, on thinking of what would take place in a few moments, as soon as the sun had set and the moon had risen, Albinik and Meroë shuddered with grief and terror, the tears flowed from their eyes, and they fell on their knees, gazing with anguish at the deep valleys, the shadows in which grew deeper and deeper. The sun had disappeared, but the moon, then in its wane, was not yet visible. There was, therefore, a considerable space of time between the sunset and the rising of the moon—an interval of poignant grief to the couple, as the certain expectation of a great calamity.

"Look, Albinik!" whispered the young woman to her husband, though they were alone—there are terrible moments when men whisper in the midst of the desert—"look! not a light, not one, in these houses, these villages, this city! Night has come, and all in these dwellings remain shrouded in darkness."

"The people of this country are about to show themselves worthy of their brethren," answered Albinik, solemnly. "They also are about to respond to the voice of our venerated Druids and the Chief of the Hundred Valleys."

"Yes, by the terror that creeps over me, I feel that we are about to see a thing such as none ever yet has seen, and which none perhaps will evermore behold."

"Meroë, do you see yonder, afar in the distance, behind the summits of those trees, a faint white light?"

"I see it; the moon is rising. The moment approaches. I feel struck with awe. Poor women! Poor children!"

"Poor husbandmen! they who have lived for so many years on the lands of their fathers—on these lands rendered fruitful by the labor of so many generations! Poor mechanics! they who have earned a comfortable subsistence by their rude trades! O the unfortunates, the unfortunates! Their heroism alone equals the greatness of their misfortunes. Meroë, Meroë," exclaimed Albinik, "the moon is rising. The sacred star of Gaul is about to give the signal for the sacrifice."

"Hesus, Hesus," exclaimed the young woman, drowned in tears, "thy wrath will never be appeased if this last sacrifice does not soothe it!"

The moon rose radiant in the midst of the stars, and inundated the earth with so bright a light that the husband and wife saw the country that lay stretched at their feet as clearly as if by daylight, to the most distant horizon. Suddenly a faint cloud of smoke, at first whitish, then black, and quickly streaked with the red flames of a kindling conflagration, rose above one of the villages that were scattered through the plain.

"Hesus! Hesus!" cried Meroë, hiding her face in the bosom of her husband, who knelt beside her. "You spoke truly. The sacred star of Gaul has given the signal for the sacrifice, and it is accomplished!"

"O liberty, holy liberty!" exclaimed Albinik.

He could not finish; his voice was choked with tears, as he clasped his weeping wife convulsively to his breast. Meroë remained with her face buried in her husband's bosom no longer than it would have taken a mother to kiss the brow, lips and eyes of her new-born babe. When, raising her head, she ventured to look in the distance, it was no longer one house, one village, one town, or one city of this long succession of valleys, that was shrouded in volumes of black smoke, streaked with the red lights of the kindling conflagration, but all the houses, all the villages, all the towns and all the cities of this long chain of valleys were a prey to the devouring flames. From the north to the south, from the east to the west, everything was on fire; the rivers themselves seemed rolling fiery waves under the burning vessels, laden with grain, wine and hay, that were sinking beneath the waters. By turns the sky was obscured by immense clouds of smoke, or illuminated by innumerable columns of fire. The valley was speedily naught but a fiery furnace, an ocean of flames, from one end to the other.* And not only were the houses, hamlets, and towns of these valleys given up to the ravages of the conflagration, but all the countries through which Meroë and Albinik journeyed for a night and a day, on their way from Vannes to the mouth of the Loire, where Cæsar's camp was pitched. Yes, all these countries have been burned by their inhabitants, who have abandoned the smoking ruins to join the Gallic army, assembled in the suburbs of Vannes. Thus has been obeyed the voice of the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, who spoke these words, which were repeated from neighbor to neighbor, from village to village and from city to city:

"In three nights from this time, at the rising of the moon, the sacred star of Gaul, let all the country be burned from Vannes to the Loire! Let Cæsar and his army find on their way neither men, nor roofs, nor

* At a little distance from the spot where St. Nazaire now stands. The country thus devastated by the flames comprised almost all of the departments of the Morbihan and the Lower Loire.

provisions, nor forage, but everywhere, everywhere, ashes, famine, solitude and death." Thus has it been done according to the orders of the Druids and the Chief of the Hundred Valleys.* Those who have witnessed this heroic devotion of each and all to the safety of their country have seen a thing which none has ever before witnessed, and which none, perhaps, will evermore behold. Thus, at least, have been expiated those fatal dissensions, those provincial rivalries, which have too long divided Gaul and given the victory to her enemies.

The night passed, and the next day likewise, and Albinik and Meroë traveled over all the burned country from Vannes to the mouth of the Loire, which they were approaching. At sunset, they reached a spot where the road which they followed parted in two.

"Which of these roads shall we follow?" said Albinik. "One must take us to the camp of Cæsar, and the other lead us away from it."

After reflecting for a few moments, Meroë replied: "By climbing this tree, we shall learn the way from the camp-fires."

"It is true," said the sailor; and, with the agility of his calling, he was preparing to climb the branches, when suddenly he stopped short, saying, "I forgot that I had lost a hand. I cannot climb."

* The patriotism of the Russians in burning Moscow to drive out and starve the French army has been justly admired; this, however, was but a single city. How much more admirable was the patriotic devotion of our fathers; for, to oppose the invasion of Gaul by the Romans, not only Brittany, but one third of Gaul, was given to the flames by its inhabitants. We quote Cæsar's own words: "The Chief of the Hundred Valleys convoked the chiefs of the allied Gallic army, and declared to them that it was absolutely necessary to change the system of warfare for another better adapted to the character of the national conflict; that it was necessary to starve out the enemy and to intercept provisions and forage, which would be the more readily done inasmuch as the Gauls were supplied with cavalry and were favored by the season; the Romans not yet being able to forage for grass, it would be easy to surprise them in the scattered dwellings whither they were driven by necessity, and thus to destroy them in detail. But the common safety, added the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, demands private sacrifices; we must resolve to burn all of our habitations, all of our villages, and such of our towns as cannot be defended, that they may not afford a refuge to the cowards who desert our cause, or serve to attract the enemy by the hope of booty; the population will find an asylum in cities remote from the scene of war. These measures appear violent and harsh to you, but would it be pleasanter to see your wives outraged and enslaved, your children loaded with chains, your kinsmen and friends slaughtered, and yourselves reserved for a violent death? For this is the fate that awaits you if conquered." "The Chief of the Hundred Valleys," says Amédée Thierry, "was listened to with calmness and resignation; not a murmur interrupted him, not an objection was raised to the painful sacrifice which he demanded: the chiefs of the tribes unanimously voted for the ruin of their fortunes and the dispersal of their families. This terrible remedy was applied without delay to the country that was in danger of being occupied by the enemy. Nothing was seen on all sides but the fire and smoke of conflagrations; by the light of these flames, through these ruins and ashes, an innumerable multitude was seen making its way toward the frontiers where it hoped to find shelter and bread; suffering and gloomy, but not disconsolate, since these sufferings were designed to procure the safety of the country."

Meroë's beautiful face clouded as she exclaimed, "You are suffering, Albinik. Alas! to see you thus mutilated!"

"Can the sea-wolf* be caught without a snare?"

"No."

"If the fishery is but successful," returned Albinik, "I shall not regret having given my hand as a bait."

The young woman sighed, and, after looking at the tree for a moment, said, "Place your back against this oak; I will put my foot in the hollow of your hand, and then upon your shoulder, from which I can reach the lower branch."

"Bold and devoted! You are always the beloved wife of my heart, as truly as my sister Hena is a saint," replied Albinik, tenderly. Then, leaning his back against the tree, he took in his sturdy hand his companion's tiny foot, which was so light and agile that, thanks to the vigor of his arm, he was able to support it till she stepped on his shoulder, from which she gained the lower branch; then, mounting from bough to bough, she reached the summit of the oak, and, casting her eyes about, perceived toward the south, under a group of seven stars, the light of a number of fires. She descended as nimbly as a bird hopping from branch to branch, and, finally resting her feet on the shoulder of her husband, leaped to the earth with one bound, saying, "We must go southward, in the direction of those seven stars; Cæsar's camp-fires are there."

"Then we must take this road," returned the sailor, pointing to the narrower of the paths.

The two travelers pursued their way. In a few moments Meroë stopped, and seemed looking for something.

"What is the matter?" asked her husband.

"Wait for me; I lost my dagger while climbing the tree; it became loosened from the belt which I wear under my sagum."

"By Hesus! we must find this dagger," said Albinik, returning. "You need a weapon, and this my brother Mikael forged and tempered himself; it can cut through copper."

"Oh! I will find it, Albinik. With this little, sharp steel blade, one always has an answer ready in whatever tongue."

After some search under the tree, they found the dagger, which was contained in a sheath, scarcely larger than a goose-quill. Meroë fastened it anew under her sagum, and again proceeded on her way with her husband. They journeyed for some time through a steep, rough road, and at length reached a plain, from which the roaring of the sea was heard far in the

* The shark.

distance, while the light of several fires was seen on a hill near by.

"Here is the camp of Cæsar—the den of the lion—at last," said Albinik, pausing.

"The den of the scourge of Gaul! Come, come! The evening is advancing."

"Meroë, the moment then has come!"

"Do you hesitate?"

"It is too late. But I should prefer a fair fight in an open field, ship to ship, soldier to soldier, and sword to sword. Ah! Meroë, for us Gauls who, despising ambuscades as cowardly, fasten brass bells to the heads of our lances in order to warn the enemy of our approach, to come here treacherously—"

"Treacherously!" exclaimed his wife. "And to oppress a free people—is that honorable? To reduce its inhabitants to slavery and to expatriate them by droves, with iron collars on their necks—is that honorable? To menace old men and children, and to give up women to the brutality of the soldiers—is that honorable? Yet now you hesitate, after marching a whole day and night by the light of the conflagration, amidst these smoking ruins, caused by the abhorrence of Roman oppression! No, no! For the extermination of wild beasts, all means are lawful—the snare as well as the boar-spear. What! do you hesitate? Answer, Albinik. To say nothing of your voluntary mutilation—to say nothing of the dangers we shall incur in entering this camp—shall we not, if Hesus aids your project, be the first victims in that immense sacrifice which we wish to offer to the gods? Come, believe me, he who gives his own life has no cause to blush; and by the love I bear you, by the virginal blood of our sister Hena, I swear to you that at this moment I feel the consciousness of performing a sacred duty. Come, come, the evening is advancing."

"What the just and valiant Meroë deems just and valiant must be so," said Albinik, pressing his companion to his breast. "Yes, yes, for the extermination of wild beasts all means are lawful, the snare as well as the boar-spear. He who gives his own life has no cause to blush. Come."

Albinik and Meroë hastened toward Cæsar's camp. In a few moments, they heard the measured tread of soldiers and the clanking of swords and armor, and saw steel casques and red plumes gleaming in the light of the moon.

"They are the patrols going their rounds," said Albinik. "Let us join them."

They speedily overtook the Roman soldiers, by whom they were instantly surrounded. Albinik had learned these words in the Roman tongue, "We are Breton Gauls; we wish to speak to Cæsar." Such were the sailor's first words to the soldiers. The latter learning, in this manner, that the travelers belonged to one of the provinces in arms, treated those whom they regarded as their prisoners rudely, bound them, and led them to the camp. This camp, like all those of the Romans, was defended by a deep, wide trench, beyond which were palisades and high earthworks, guarded by soldiers.

Albinik and Meroë were at first led to one of the gates of the earthworks. By the side of this gate they saw—and the remembrance is cruel—five great wooden crosses, to each of which was nailed a Gallic sailor, with blood-stained garments. The moon threw a bright light on the corpses.

"We were not deceived," whispered Albinik to his companion. "The pilots were crucified, after suffering frightful tortures, rather than consent to pilot Cæsar's fleet to the coast of Brittany."

"To make them suffer torture and death on the cross—is that honorable?" answered Meroë. "Do you still hesitate? Do you talk of treachery?"

Albinik made no reply, but pressed his companion's hand in the darkness. On being brought before the officer in command of the post, the sailor repeated the only words that he knew in the Roman tongue:

"We are Breton Gauls; we wish to speak to Cæsar."

In these times of war, the Romans often detained or captured travelers, in order to learn of them what was taking place in the rebellious provinces. Cæsar had given orders that the prisoners or refugees who might enlighten him concerning the movements of the Gauls should always be brought directly to him. The husband and wife were not surprised, therefore, to see themselves, as they had secretly hoped, conducted through the camp to Cæsar's tent, which was guarded by the flower of his Spanish veterans, commissioned to watch over his person.

Albinik and Meroë were freed from their bonds on being brought to the tent of Cæsar, the scourge of Gaul. They strove to restrain the expression of their hatred, and looked about them with gloomy curiosity. This was what they saw: The tent of the Roman general, which was covered on the outside with thick skins, like all the tents of the camp, was hung on the inside with purple cloth, embroidered with gold and white silk; the earth, trodden hard, was covered by a carpet of tiger-skin. Cæsar was finishing supper, half reclining on a camp-bed, hidden by a large lion's skin, with golden claws and carbuncle eyes. Within reach of the couch, on a low table, Albinik and Meroë saw great vessels of gold and silver exquisitely chiseled, and cups set with precious stones. Seated humbly at the foot of Cæsar's couch, Meroë be-

held a sad spectacle for a free woman—a young and beautiful slave, doubtless an African, for her white dress contrasted strongly with her copper complexion and her large black eyes, which she raised slowly toward the two strangers, while caressing a huge tawny greyhound that was stretched by her side. She seemed as timid as the dog.

The generals, officers, secretaries, and young and beautiful freedmen of Cæsar surrounded his couch, while black Abyssinian slaves, with their necks, wrists and ankles adorned with coral ornaments, stood as motionless as statues, holding torches of perfumed wax, by the light of which glittered the splendid armor of the Romans.

Cæsar, before whom Albinik and Meroë cast down their eyes in order not to betray their hatred, had exchanged his armor for a long silken robe, richly embroidered; his head was bare, and nothing concealed his high, bald forehead, on each side of which his brown hair was smoothed. The heat of the Gallic wine, of which he drank every evening immoderately, it is said, caused his eyes to sparkle and flushed his pale cheeks; his face was imperious, and his smile mocking and cruel. He was leaning on his elbow, holding in his hand, emaciated by debauchery, a large golden cup, set with pearls, which he drained slowly as he fixed his penetrating eye on the two prisoners, who stood in such a manner that Albinik almost entirely concealed Meroë.

Cæsar spoke a few words, in the Roman tongue, to his officers. They burst into a laugh, and one of them, approaching the prisoners, rudely pushed Albinik aside, and, taking Meroë by the hand, drew her forward a few paces, doubtless in order that the general might gaze at her more at his ease, which he did as he handed his empty cup to one of his young cup-bearers without turning his head.

Albinik knew how to conquer himself; he remained calm on seeing his chaste wife blush under the bold gaze of Cæsar. The latter soon called to him a man richly clad, one of his interpreters, who, after exchanging a few words with the Roman general, approached Meroë and said in the Gallic tongue:

"Cæsar asks whether you are man or woman?"

"I and my companion have fled from the Gallic camp," answered Meroë, boldly. "Whether I am man or woman matters little to Cæsar."

At these words, which the interpreter translated, Cæsar burst into a fit of sarcastic laughter, while the Roman officers shared the gayety of their general. Cæsar continued to empty cup after cup, fixing a more and more ardent gaze on the wife of Albinik. He said a few words to the interpreter, whereupon the latter commenced the examination of the prisoners, transmitting their answers to the general, who then indicated to him new questions.

"Who are you," said the interpreter, "and whence have you come?"

"We are Bretons," answered Albinik. "We come from the Gallic camp, pitched before the walls of Vannes, two days' march from here."

"Why did you forsake the Gallic army?"

Albinik made no reply, but unwound the bloody bandage that enveloped his arm. The Romans saw that his left hand had been cut off.

"Who has mutilated you in this manner?" asked the interpreter.

"The Gauls."

"But you are a Gaul yourself?"

"That matters little to the Chief of the Hundred Valleys."

At the name of the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, Cæsar bent his brows, and his face assumed an expression of hatred and envy.

"Explain yourself," said the interpreter.

"I am a sailor, and commanded a trading-vessel. Myself and several other captains received orders to transport a large body of armed men by sea to the harbor of Vannes, on Morbihan Bay. I obeyed. A gust of wind carried away one of my masts, and my vessel was the last to arrive, whereupon the Chief of the Hundred Valleys ordered me to be punished as a laggard. He was generous, however; he spared my life, and gave me the choice between the loss of my nose, ears, or a limb. I was mutilated, not for lacking courage or zeal; that would have been just, and I should have submitted without complaint to the laws of my country."

"But this iniquitous punishment," interrupted Meroë, "was inflicted on Albinik because the wind rose against him. As well punish with death him who cannot see clearly in the darkness, or who cannot obscure the light of the sun!"

"And this mutilation covers me forever with shame," exclaimed Albinik. "It says to all, 'This man is a coward!' I had never known hatred; now my heart is full of it. Perish this accursed country, where I can never more live honored! Perish its liberty—perish my people—so that I am avenged on the Chief of the Hundred Valleys! For this I would joyfully give the limbs that he has left me. Therefore have I come here, with my companion; sharing my shame, she also shares my hatred. This hatred we offer to Cæsar. Let him use it as he will; let him try us; our lives answer for our sincerity. As to rewards, we want none of them."

"Vengeance—that is what we want!" added Meroë.

"How can you serve Cæsar against the

Chief of the Hundred Valleys?" said the interpreter to Albinik.

"I offer to serve him as a sailor, a soldier, a guide, or even a spy, if he wishes."

"Why did you not seek to kill the Chief of the Hundred Valleys while you were in the Gallic camp and able to approach him?" said the interpreter. "You would thus have been avenged."

"Immediately after my husband's mutilation," returned Meroë, "we were driven from the camp and forbidden to return."

The interpreter conversed anew with the Roman general, who, while listening, did not cease to empty his cup and to pursue Meroë with his audacious glances.

"You are a sailor, you say," resumed the interpreter. "You have commanded a trading-vessel?"

"Yes."

"And are you a good navigator?"

"I am twenty-eight; since I was twelve I have been on the sea, and for the last four years have commanded a vessel."

"Are you well acquainted with the coast from Vannes to the channel that separates Great Britain and France?"

"I am from the port of Vannes, near Karnak. For the last sixteen years, I have continually navigated these coasts."

"Are you a good pilot?"

"May I lose the limbs left me by the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, if there is a bay, a cape, an islet, a shoal, a sandbank, or a breaker that I do not know, from the Gulf of Aquitania to the Bay of Dunkirk!"

"You boast of your skill as a pilot; how will you prove it?"

"We are near the coast; to any one who is not a good and skillful sailor, nothing can be more dangerous than the navigation of the mouth of the Loire, going northward."

"It is true," replied the Roman; "yesterday a Roman galley was stranded and lost on a sandbank."

"He who can pilot a boat well can pilot a galley well, I think," said Albinik.

"Yes."

"Conduct us to-morrow to the coast. I am acquainted with the fishing-boats of the country. My companion and I are sufficient to manage one of them; and from the shore, Cæsar can see us glide by the shoals and breakers, and skim over them like gulls over the wave. Then Cæsar will believe me capable of safely piloting a galley on the coasts of Brittany."

Albinik's offer having been interpreted to Cæsar, the latter replied:

"We accept the trial that you propose; it shall take place to-morrow morning. If it proves your skill as a pilot, it may be that, all possible precautions having been taken against treachery, in case that you should be seeking to deceive us, you will be charged with a commission that will satisfy your hatred; but for this you must gain the entire confidence of Cæsar."

"What shall I do to obtain it?"

"You must know the forces and plans of the Gallic army. What are they? Beware of lying; we have already received information thereof, and shall know whether you are sincere; if not, the instruments of torture are close at hand."

"Having reached Vannes in the morning, and been arrested, tried, and punished almost immediately, and then driven from the Gallic camp, it was impossible for me to know the deliberations of the council held the evening before," replied Albinik, "but the situation was considered grave, for the women were summoned to this council, which lasted from sunset to daybreak. There was a rumor that large reinforcements had reached the Gallic army."

"What were these reinforcements?"

"The tribes of Finisterre and the Côtes du Nord, and also those of Lisieux, Amiens, and Perche. It was even said that warriors had arrived by sea from Brabant."

After translating Albinik's reply to Cæsar, the interpreter resumed, "You tell the truth; your words agree with the reports which we have received; but some scouts who have come in this evening have brought the news that, two or three leagues from here, the light of a fire has been seen in the north. You come from the north, have you any knowledge of it?"

"From the suburbs of Vannes to three leagues from here," replied Albinik, "there remains not a city, nor a town, nor a village, nor a house, nor a sack of wheat, nor a skin of wine, nor an ox, nor a sheep, nor a stack of hay, nor a man, nor a woman, nor a child; provisions, cattle, and wealth—all that could not be carried away have been abandoned to the flames by the inhabitants. At the moment that I speak, all the tribes of the burned countries have rallied to the support of the Gallic army, leaving behind them naught but a desert, covered with smoking ruins."

As Albinik spoke, the surprise of the interpreter became greater and greater; in his dismay, he appeared not to dare to believe what he heard, and hesitated to tell Cæsar this terrible news. At last, however, he resigned himself to the necessity of doing so. Albinik fixed his eyes on Cæsar, in order to read from his face the impression made on him by the words of the interpreter. The Roman general is said to be very dissembling, but in proportion as the interpreter advanced, stupefaction, fear, rage, and also doubt were depicted on the features of the oppressor of Gaul. His officers and counselors looked at each other in consternation, and exchanged words in a low voice that seemed full of anguish.

Cæsar, suddenly starting up from his couch, addressed a few hasty and violent words to the interpreter, who said to the sailor, "Cæsar accuses you of falsehood. Such a disaster is impossible. If you have lied, you will expiate your crime in tortures."

Albinik and Meroë experienced a profound joy on seeing the rage and consternation of the Roman, who was unwilling to believe in this heroic resolution, so fatal to his army. They, however, concealed this joy, and Albinik replied:

"Cæsar has Numidian horsemen and indefatigable steeds in his camp; let him instantly send them out to reconnoitre; let them not only traverse all the countries through which we have just journeyed for a night and a day, but let them extend their course eastward in the direction of Touraine; let them go still farther, to Berry, and as far as their horses can carry them, they will pass through a desert country, ravaged by conflagration."

Scarcely had Albinik pronounced these words when the Roman general gave orders to several of his officers, who hastily quitted the tent while he, returning to his usual dissimulation, and doubtless sorry for having betrayed his fears in the presence of the Gallic refugees, affected to smile, reclined anew on his lion-skin, and again extending his cup to his cup-bearer, drained it after saying to Albinik and Meroë, through the interpreter:

"Cæsar empties his cup in honor of the Gauls, and, by Jupiter! he thanks them for having accomplished what he intended to do himself, for old Gaul shall humble itself before Rome, as submissive and repentant as the meanest slave, or not one of its towns shall remain standing, not one of its warriors living, not one of its inhabitants free!"

"May the gods hear Cæsar!" replied Albinik. "May Gaul be enslaved or devastated; I shall thus be avenged on the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, for he will suffer a thousand deaths in witnessing the subjugation or destruction of the country that I now curse!"

While the interpreter translated these words, the Roman general, either the better to dissemble his fears or to drown them in wine, emptied his cup again and again, and began anew to cast ardent glances at Meroë; then, appearing to reflect, he smiled in a singular manner, and, making a sign to one of his freedmen, whispered to him and also to the Moorish slave, whereupon both quitted the tent. The interpreter then said to Albinik:

"Thus far your answers have proved your sincerity. If the news which you bring is confirmed, and you show yourself a bold and skillful pilot to-morrow, you will be able to gratify your revenge. If you satisfy Cæsar, he will be generous; if you deceive him, your punishment will be terrible. On entering the tent, did you see five men that had been crucified?"

"I saw them."

"They were pilots that refused to serve us. They were carried to the cross; they could not walk, their limbs had been broken by torture. Such will be the fate of you and your companion on the slightest suspicion."

"I have no more fear of these threats than I have hope of reward from Cæsar's munificence," replied Albinik, proudly. "Let him first try me, and afterward judge me."

"You and your companion will be taken to a neighboring tent and held there as prisoners."

At a sign from the Roman, the two Gauls were led away, and conducted through a winding passage covered with canvas, to an adjoining tent, where they were left alone. Feeling great distrust, and expecting to pass the night in this place, they examined it with attention. The tent was circular, and was hung with a bright-colored striped woolen stuff, which was stretched on ropes, fastened to the ground by means of stakes. The stuff not reaching quite to the ground, Albinik remarked a space about three times as broad as the palm of his hand between the coarse hides which served as a carpet and the lower edge of the tent. No other opening to the tent was visible, except that by which Albinik and Meroë had just entered, and which was closed by the sides of the canvas overlapping each other. An iron bedstead, covered with cushions, was half enveloped in a drapery, which could be drawn quite around it by means of a long cord above the pillows. A brass lamp, on the end of a long rod fixed in the ground, lighted the interior. After silently and carefully examining the place where he was to pass the night with his wife, Albinik said in a low whisper:

"Cæsar will set spies on us to-night, who will listen to our conversation, but however softly they may come, or however adroitly they may conceal themselves, they cannot approach the canvas without our seeing them through this opening," and he showed his wife the circular space between the ground and the lower edge of the tent.

"Do you think, then, Albinik, that Cæsar has any suspicion? Could he suppose that a man would have the courage to mutilate himself in order to win belief in his professions of resentment and vengeance?"

"And our brethren—the inhabitants of the countries that we have just passed through—have they not shown a courage a thousand times greater than mine, in giving up their homes to conflagration? My only

hope is in our enemy's urgent need of finding Gallic pilots to conduct his galleys to the coast of Brittany. Now, above all, that the country no longer offers any resources to his army, the approach by sea is perhaps his only means of safety. You saw that, on learning of this heroic devastation, dissembling as he always is, they say, he could not conceal his rage and consternation, which he soon strove to forget in the intoxication of the cup. And this was not the only intoxication to which he abandoned himself. I saw you blush under the obstinate gaze of this infamous profligate."

"O Albinik! while my forehead blushed with shame and anger under the eyes of Cæsar, twice my hand sought and grasped the hilt of my dagger. At one moment I measured the distance between me and him; he was too far off."

"At the first movement, and before you could have reached him, you would have been pierced with a thousand blows. Our plan is better. If it succeeds," said Albinik, casting an expressive glance at his companion, and gradually elevating his voice, instead of speaking in a whisper, as he had hitherto done—"if our plan succeeds, if Cæsar has faith in my word, we can at last avenge ourselves on my tormentor. Oh! I tell you, I feel now toward Gaul all the hatred that I formerly felt toward the Romans."

Meroë, surprised at Albinik's words, looked at him almost without comprehending him; but, by a gesture, he drew her attention to the opening at the bottom of the tent, where the toes of the interpreter's sandals were visible.

"I share your hatred as I have shared the love of your heart and the perils of your seafaring life," returned Meroë. "Hesus grant that Cæsar may comprehend the services that you can render him, and that I may witness your revenge, as I have witnessed your punishment!"

These words and others, exchanged between the husband and wife, in order to deceive the interpreter, having doubtless satisfied him as to their sincerity, they perceived that he withdrew from the tent. A few moments after, just as Albinik and Meroë, wearied by their journey, were about to throw themselves, dressed as they were, on the bed, the interpreter appeared at the entrance of the tent, through which several Spanish soldiers were seen. "Cæsar wishes to speak to you immediately," said he, "follow me."

Albinik, persuaded that the suspicions of the Roman general, if he had entertained any, had just been dispelled by the report of the interpreter, believed himself on the point of learning the commission which was to be intrusted to him, and was preparing to quit the tent with Meroë, when the interpreter, arresting the latter by a gesture, said, "You cannot accompany us; Cæsar wishes to speak with your companion alone."

"I will not leave Meroë," said the sailor, taking his wife's hand.

"Dare you refuse to obey my orders?" rejoined the interpreter. "Take care, take care!"

"We will both go to Cæsar, or neither of us will go," returned Meroë.

"Poor fools! are you not prisoners, and at our mercy?" said the interpreter, pointing to the soldiers standing motionless at the entrance of the tent. "I will be obeyed, either willingly or by force."

Albinik reflected that to resist was impossible. Death did not terrify him; but to die was to abandon his projects at the very moment that they seemed about to succeed. Nevertheless, he was uneasy at leaving Meroë alone in the tent. His wife divined his fears; and feeling, like him, that they must submit to necessity, she said, "Go alone; I will wait for you without fear, as surely as your brother is a skillful armorer."

At these words of Meroë, remembering that she wore under her sagum a dagger forged by Mikael, Albinik more tranquilly followed the interpreter. The canvas of the entrance, which had been raised for a moment, fell. In a few instants, Meroë fancied that she heard the shock of a heavy body in that direction. She ran thither, and perceived that a thick osier screen had been placed on the outside in such a manner as to block up the entrance. Surprised at first by this precaution, she reflected that it was better for her to remain thus secluded while awaiting Albinik, and that perhaps he himself had asked that the tent should be thus closed until his return.

Meroë seated herself pensively on the bed, full of hope in the conversation which her husband was then doubtless holding with Cæsar. She was suddenly aroused from her reverie by a singular noise from the direction opposite the bed. Almost immediately, the canvas was rent asunder from the top to the bottom. Meroë started up; her first impulse was to arm herself with the dagger that she wore under her sagum; then, trusting in herself and the weapon she held, she waited, calling to mind the Gallic proverb, "He who holds his own death in his hands has nothing to dread except from the gods." At that moment the canvas opened, and from the thick darkness emerged the young Moorish slave in her white garments.

CHAPTER II.

Treachery of the Moorish slave.—Cæsar and Meroë.—The coffer of precious stones.—The cord.—Address and generosity of Cæsar.—The pilot-boat —*Tor e Benn*, the war song of the Gallic sailors.—Albinik pilots the Roman fleet to Morbihan Bay.—The man with the axe.—The Channel of Perdition.—The Roman veteran and his two sons.—Encounter with an Irish vessel.—The quicksands.—A Breton never is a traitor.

No sooner had the Moorish girl entered the tent, than she fell on her knees and extended her clasped hands toward the companion of Albinik, who, touched by this supplicating gesture and by the grief imprinted on the features of the slave, felt neither distrust nor fear, but compassion, mingled with curiosity, and laid her dagger at the head of the bed. The young Moor crept forward on her knees, still extending both hands toward Meroë, who leaned forward pityingly to raise her from the ground; when the slave, having thus approached the bed on which the dagger lay, bounded forward and seized the weapon, of which her eyes, doubtless, had not lost sight since she entered the tent, and before the wife of Albinik could recover from her stupor, the dagger was hurled from the tent amidst the darkness.

The Moor burst into a fit of savage laughter when she had thus disarmed Meroë, who, seeing herself betrayed, rushed toward the opening in order to find her dagger or to fly, when she saw Cæsar issue from the darkness and enter the tent.

Seized with terror, the Gallic woman fell back. Cæsar continued to advance, and the slave disappeared through the opening, which closed after her. From the Roman's uncertain step, his fiery glances, and the animation which flushed his cheeks, Meroë saw that he was half intoxicated, which lessened her fear. He held in his hand a casket of precious wood. After silently gazing at the young woman with such effrontery that she felt the blush of shame mount anew to her brow, he took from the casket a richly-chased gold necklace, and flashed it before the lamp, as if the better to display it in the eyes of her whom he wished to tempt; then, feigning an ironical respect, he stooped, laid the necklace at the feet of the Gallic woman, and rising, interrogated her with an audacious glance. Meroë, standing with her arms folded on her breast, which heaved with scorn and indignation, looked proudly at Cæsar and repulsed the necklace with her foot. The Roman made a gesture of insulting surprise, laughed with an air of disdainful confidence, and, choosing from the casket a magnificent gold net for the hair, set with carbuncles, flashed it in the light of the lamp as he had done the necklace, deposited it at Meroë's feet, redoubling his ironical respect, and rising, seemed to say to her, "This time I am certain of triumph." Meroë, pale with anger, smiled disdainfully; whereupon Cæsar poured at her feet the whole contents of the casket—a shower of gold, pearls and precious stones, necklaces, belts, ear-rings, bracelets, and jewels of all sorts.

This time Meroë did not content herself with repulsing this wealth with her foot, but trampled it under the heel of her boot, and with a look arrested the infamous profligate who was advancing toward her with open arms. A moment astounded, the Roman placed both hands on his heart as if to protest his adoration; the Gallic woman replied to this mute language by a burst of laughter so contemptuous that Cæsar, drunk with passion, wine and anger, seemed to say, "I have offered you wealth, and have sued to you, but all in vain; now I shall have recourse to force."

Alone, disarmed, and persuaded that her cries would bring her no aid, the wife of Albinik leaped on the bed, seized the long cord which served to draw the curtains, tied it around her neck, and mounted the head of the bed, ready to spring into the air and strangle herself by the weight of her body at the first movement of Cæsar. The latter saw so desperate a resolution on the features of Meroë that he stood motionless, and, whether through remorse for his violence—whether through the certainty, if he employed force, of having naught but a corpse in his possession—or whether, lastly, as he afterward adroitly pretended, he had been acting under the impulse of a hidden and almost generous motive, he fell back a few paces and raised his hands to heaven, as if calling the gods to witness that he would respect his prisoner. The latter, still distrustful, stood ready to take her own life. The Roman moved toward the secret opening of the tent, disappeared for a moment in the darkness, gave an order in a loud voice, and speedily returned, remaining at a considerable distance from the bed, with his arms folded on his toga. Ignorant whether the danger which she had run might not be about to increase, Meroë remained standing on the bed, with the cord around her neck. In a few moments, however, she saw the interpreter enter, accompanied by Albinik, whose side she reached with one bound.

"Your wife is a woman of heroic virtue," said the interpreter to him. "Behold these treasures at her feet—she has rejected them. The love of the great Cæsar was offered her—she disdained it. He feigned to have recourse to violence—your wife, disarmed by stratagem, was ready to put herself to death. She has therefore come off gloriously from the test."

"A test!" returned Albinik, with an air of sinister doubt—"a test! Who has

the right here to try the virtue of my wife?"

"The feelings of revenge which brought you to the Roman camp were those of a proud soul roused to indignation by injustice and barbarity; the mutilation which you have suffered seemed, above all, to prove the sincerity of your words; but fugitives always inspire a secret distrust. The husband is often judged by the wife; yours is a valiant woman. To inspire such fidelity, you must be a man of courage and honor. It is of this that Cæsar wished to assure himself."

"I have my doubts," replied the sailor, with a distrustful air. "The profligacy of your general is well known."

"The gods have sent us a precious auxiliary in your person that may become fatal to Gaul. Do you believe Cæsar mad enough to wish to make an enemy of you by outraging your wife, and this at the very moment when, perchance, he is about to intrust you with an important mission? No, I repeat, he wished to try you both, and thus far you have stood the test well."

Cæsar interrupted his interpreter, and said a few words to him, then bowing respectfully to Meroë and saluting Albinik with a friendly gesture, he withdrew slowly and majestically.

"You and your wife are henceforth sure of the general's protection," said the interpreter. "He has pledged his word that you shall not again be separated or molested. The wife of the courageous sailor has despised these rich jewels," added the interpreter, picking them up and replacing them in the casket. "Cæsar wishes to keep in memory of the virtue of a Gallic woman the dagger of which she was deprived by stratagem. Rest assured, however, that she will not remain unarmed."

Almost at the same instant two young freedmen entered the tent, bearing on a large silver salver a little Oriental dagger of costly workmanship, and a short Spanish sword, slightly curved, and suspended from a baldric of red leather, magnificently embroidered with gold. The interpreter presented the dagger to Meroë and the sword to Albinik, saying, "Rest in peace, and keep these gifts of Cæsar's munificence."

"Assure him," returned Albinik, "that his words and generosity have dispelled my suspicions; he will henceforth have no more devoted auxiliary than I, till my vengeance is satisfied."

The interpreter withdrew with the freedmen. Albinik told his wife that the interpreter had conducted him to Cæsar's tent, where they had remained till a slave had summoned them to return; and Meroë, in turn, told Albinik all that had happened during his absence. They concluded, not without probability, that Cæsar, half intoxicated, had at first yielded to an infamous thought, but that the desperate resolution of the Gallic woman, and doubtless, also, the reflection that he risked alienating a fugitive who might be useful to him, having dispelled the fumes of wine, he had, with his habitual address and cunning, under the pretense of a test, given an appearance almost of generosity to an odious deed.

The next morning, Cæsar, accompanied by his generals, repaired to the bank, overlooking the mouth of the Loire, where a tent had been pitched. From this place could be seen the sea and its dangerous coasts, abounding in sandbanks and rocks on a level with the water. The wind blew violently. A fishing-bark, at once light and strong, and rigged in the Gallic fashion, with a single square sail, cantwise, was anchored by the shore. Albinik and Meroë were conducted thither.

"The weather is stormy and the sea threatening," said the interpreter; "dare you venture in this boat alone with your wife? There are some fishermen, prisoners, here; do you wish their aid?"

"My wife and I have braved many dangerous tempests alone in our boat, on our way through the storms to my vessel, anchored off the shore."

"But now that you are mutilated, how can you maneuver?"

"One hand is enough to steer with, and my wife will set the sail. It is a woman's trade to handle linen," added the sailor, gayly, in order to inspire the Roman with confidence.

"Go then," said the interpreter. "May the gods conduct you."

The bark, launched by several soldiers, rocked for a moment, from the flapping of the sail in the wind, but Meroë soon set it, while her husband held the rudder; the breeze filled the sail, and the bark swayed gracefully, and seemed to skim the waves like a sea-bird. Meroë, in her sailor-dress, stood at the prow, her black hair floating in the wind, and the white spray dashing in her noble and beautiful face. Albinik knew these coasts as well as a shepherd knows the wastes on which he feeds his flocks. The bark seemed to sport with the giant waves; from time to time, Albinik and Meroë discerned on the distant shore the tent of Cæsar, with its purple streamers, and saw the gold and silver armor of his generals glittering in the sun.

"O Cæsar! thou scourge of Gaul, thou cruel and most profligate of men," exclaimed Meroë; "thou knowest not that this frail bark, which perhaps thou art now following at a distance with thine eyes, bears two of thy implacable enemies! Thou knowest not that they have devoted their lives in advance to Hesus, in the hope

of offering to Teutates, the god of travelers by land and sea, a sacrifice worthy of him —a sacrifice of many thousands of Romans, engulfed in the depths of the ocean! And, stretching our hands toward thee, grateful and joyous, O Hesus! we shall be swallowed up in the whirlpool with the enemies of our sacred Gaul!"

The bark of Albinik and Meroë, grazing the shoals and breakers in the tortuous passages, now stood out to sea, and then neared the shore. The wife of the sailor, seeing him sad and pensive, said:

"Why are you so thoughtful, Albinik? Everything seconds our plans; the suspicions of the Roman general are dispelled; the skill of your maneuvering will determine him to accept your services, and to-morrow, perhaps, you will pilot the galleys of our enemies."

"Yes, I will pilot them to the whirlpool, where they will be swallowed up with us."

"What a magnificent offering to our gods; ten thousand Romans, perhaps!"

"Meroë," replied Albinik, with a sigh, "when, after ceasing to live here, together with these soldiers—brave warriors, after all—we shall be born elsewhere with them, they will have a right to say to me, 'It was not valiantly, with lance and sword, that you slew us; no, you slew us without fighting, by treachery. You were watching at the helm, while we were sleeping, confiding and tranquil; you steered us to the whirlpool, and the sea swallowed us up in an instant. You were like a cowardly poisoner, who throws poison into his enemy's cup. Was this valiant? No, it was not the frank daring of your fathers, those proud Gauls who fought us half-naked, jeering at our iron armor, and asking why we fought if we were afraid of wounds and death.'"

"Ah!" exclaimed Meroë, with bitterness and grief, "why did the Druidesses teach me that a woman should escape insult by death? Why did your mother Margarid so often relate to us, as an heroic example for us to follow, the story of your ancestress Siomara, who cut off the head of the Roman who had outraged her, and carried it to her husband in the skirt of her robe, with the proud and chaste words, 'Two living men cannot boast of having possessed me!' Ah! why did I not yield to Cæsar?"

"Meroë!"

"Then, perhaps, you would have avenged yourself! Faint heart and nerveless soul, must the outrage be accomplished, the cup of shame drained, to kindle your wrath?"

"Meroë, Meroë!"

"It is not enough for you, then, that this Roman should have proposed to your wife to sell herself—to give herself to him in exchange for his gifts? It was to your wife—your wife, do you hear?—that Cæsar made this ignominious offer!"

"You speak truly," answered the sailor, his heart kindling at the remembrance of these insults; "I was faint-hearted."

His wife pursued, with redoubled bitterness: "No, I see that it was not enough. I should have died; then, perhaps, you would have sworn vengeance on my body. Ah! these Romans, of whom we wish to make an offering to the gods, inspire you with pity. They were not accomplices in the crime which Cæsar sought to commit, you say? Answer: would these soldiers—these brave warriors—have come to my aid if, instead of trusting to my courage alone and drawing my strength from my love for you, I had cried, weeping and supplicating, 'Romans! in the name of your mothers, defend me from your general's violence?' Answer: would they have come at my call—would they have forgotten that I was a Gaul, and that Cæsar was Cæsar? Would the generous hearts of these brave men, who, after outraging the mothers, drown the children in their blood, have been roused to indignation?"

Albinik did not suffer his wife to finish. He blushed at his weakness; he blushed at having for an instant forgotten the horrors committed by the Romans in their impious war; he blushed at having forgotten that the sacrifice of the enemies of Gaul is the most acceptable of all offerings to Hesus. In his anger, and for his sole answer, he struck up the war-song of the Breton sailors, as if wishing the wind to carry these words of defiance and death to the ears of Cæsar:

"*Tor e benn! Tor e benn!**

"As I was lying on my deck, I heard the sea-eagle call in the midst of the night. He was calling his eaglets and all the birds of the shore; and thus he cried: 'Arise, all of ye; come, come hither.' 'No, it is not the flesh of dogs or sheep that we wish, but the flesh of the Romans.'

"*Tor e benn! Tor e benn!*

"'Old sea-bird, tell me, what hast thou there?' 'I have the head of the Roman chief; I am going to pluck out both his eyes.' 'And thou, sea-wolf, what hast thou there?' 'I have the heart of the Roman chief, which I am gnawing.' 'And thou, sea-serpent, what dost thou there, coiled around that neck, with thy flat head close to those cold blue lips?' 'I am watching for the soul of the Roman chief in its flight.'

"*Tor e benn! Tor e benn!*"

Meroë, roused to enthusiasm by this war-song, repeated the chorus, in defiance of Cæsar, whose tent was seen in the distance,

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* This Gallic war-cry signified *Strike the head*, or *Fell to the earth.*

"*Tor e benn! Tor e benn!*" while the bark shot forward, sporting with the rocks and shoals of the dangerous channels, now standing out to sea, and now skirting the shore.

"You are the boldest and most skillful pilot that I ever met in my life, notwithstanding all that I have journeyed by sea," said Cæsar to Albinik, as soon as he regained the shore and landed with Meroë. "To-morrow, if the weather is favorable, you shall pilot an expedition, the end of which will be made known to you when you put to sea."

The next morning at sunrise, the weather being found propitious and the sea smooth, Cæsar determined that the Roman galleys should put to sea, and sent for Albinik. By the side of the Roman general stood motionless a warrior of prodigious stature and ferocious air. He was covered from head to foot with a flexible armor, made of iron links interlaced together, and looked like a statue of iron; in his hand he held a short and heavy two-edged axe. The interpreter said to Albinik, pointing to the soldier, "You see this man; during the journey, he will follow you like your shadow. If, through neglect or treachery, a single one of the galleys should be stranded, he has orders to kill you and your wife on the spot. If, on the contrary, you steer the fleet safely to port, the general will load you with gifts, and the most fortunate will envy you."

"Cæsar shall be content," replied Albinik. Then, followed closely by the soldier with the axe, he and Meroë embarked on the prætorian galley, the course of which guided that of the others, and which was distinguished by three gilt torches at the poop. Each galley carried seventy oarsmen, ten sailors to manage the sails, fifty archers and slingers in light armor, and a hundred and fifty soldiers, clad in iron from head to foot.

When the galleys had quitted the shore, the prætor, the military commandant of the fleet, commanded Albinik, through an interpreter, to steer northward to Morbihan Bay, and to land in the suburbs of Vannes, where the Gallic army was assembled. Albinik, with his hand on the tiller, transmitted his orders, through the interpreter, to the chief oarsman, who, by means of an iron hammer, with which he struck a brass bell, quickly or slowly, by the instructions of the pilot, thus indicated the movement of the oars according as it was necessary to accelerate or to slacken the speed of the prætorian galley, by which the Roman fleet guided its course.

The galleys, impelled by a favorable wind, advanced northward. According to the interpreter, the oldest mariners marveled at the boldness and alertness of the Gallic pilot. After a considerable length of time, the fleet reached the southernmost extremity of Morbihan Bay, and prepared to enter its waters, the most dangerous on all the coast of Brittany, on account of the multitude of islets, rocks, and sandbanks, and, most of all, undercurrents of irresistible violence.

An islet, situated midway in the entrance to the bay, which was shut in by two promontories, divided this entrance into two exceedingly narrow channels. Nothing on the surface of the waters, neither breakers, nor foam, nor change of color in the waves, indicated the slightest difference between these two passages. Nevertheless, one presented no danger, while the other was so formidable that in a hundred strokes of the oars, the vessels entering this channel in single file, guided by the prætorian galley, piloted by Albinik, would be gradually drawn, by the strength of the undercurrent, toward a cluster of rocks which was seen at a distance, and over which the sea, everywhere else calm, was dashing with fury. The commanders of the galleys could only perceive the danger, however, one after the other, each one discerning it only from the rapid drifting of the vessel that preceded him, and then it would be too late; for the violence of the current would hurry forward and precipitate vessel after vessel into the whirlpool, where, tossed about, and coming violently into collision with each other, they would either split and sink with their crews, or be dashed to pieces on the rocks. A hundred strokes more of the oars, and the fleet was lost in this channel of perdition.

The sea was so calm and smooth that no one among the Romans suspected the perils. The oarsmen sang in tune to the measured strokes of their oars; some of the soldiers were cleaning their arms, others were asleep at the prow, and others were playing at hucklebones. At a little distance from Albinik, who never left the helm, a veteran, with white hairs and scarred face, was seated on one of the benches of the poop, between his sons, two beautiful young archers, of from eighteen to twenty. While chatting with their father, each had familiarly passed an arm around the neck of the old soldier, and all three sat thus entwined together, talking with sweet trust and tender affection. Albinik, in spite of his hatred of the Romans, could not help sighing compassionately on thinking of the fate of all these soldiers, who had no idea of the nearness of death.

At that moment, one of the light craft used by the sailors of Ireland issued from Morbihan Bay by the channel that presented no danger. Albinik, in his vocation, had made frequent voyages to the coast of Ireland, a country inhabited by people

of Gallic origin, and speaking almost the same language as the Gauls, but with an accent which rendered it difficult of comprehension to any one who was not accustomed to it like Albinik.

The Irishman, whether fearing to be pursued and taken by some one of the warlike galleys which he saw approaching, and seeking to escape the danger by coming himself to meet the fleet; or whether, thinking to give it some valuable information, steered toward the prætorian galley, which led the way. Albinik trembled. The interpreter, perhaps, might question the Irishman, and learn from him the danger which the fleet would encounter by taking one of the channels. He therefore ordered the oarsmen to hasten their speed, in hopes to reach the Channel of Perdition before the craft could overtake the galleys. The commander, however, exchanged a few words with the interpreter, upon which the latter bade the sailor wait for the vessel that was approaching, in order to make inquiries of it respecting the Gallic fleet. Albinik obeyed, not daring to thwart this command for fear of arousing suspicion, and the little craft was soon within hailing distance of the galley.

The interpreter, advancing, addressed the Irishman in Gallic, "Where are you from? Whither are you bound? Have you met any vessels at sea?"

The Irishman signified by gestures that he did not understand the questions, and said, in broken Gallic, "I bring news to the fleet."

"What language does this man speak?" said the interpreter to Albinik. "I do not understand it, though it does not seem wholly strange to me."

"He speaks a mixture of Irish and Gallic," replied Albinik. "I have often traded on the coast of his country, and know his language. He comes to bring news to the fleet."

"Ask him what this news is."

"What news do you bring?" shouted Albinik.

"The Gallic vessels from the different ports of Brittany assembled yesterday in this bay," replied the Irishman. "They are very numerous, strongly manned, well armed, and ready for battle. They have chosen their anchorage at the farthest point of the bay, close by the harbor of Vannes; you cannot see them till you have doubled the promontory of Aëlkern."

"The Irishman brings favorable news," said Albinik. "The Gallic fleet is dispersed in all directions; part of its vessels are in the Auray River, and the rest are still farther off, in the direction of Audiern Bay and Ushant. The only ships in this bay for the defense of the port of Vannes are five or six old trading-vessels, hastily and insufficiently armed."

"By Jupiter!" cried the delighted interpreter, "the gods, as usual, are friendly to Cæsar."

The prætor and the officers, to whom the interpreter repeated the false news given by the pilot, also appeared rejoiced at the dispersal of the Gallic fleet. Vannes was thus delivered almost defenseless to the power of the Romans, on the side of the sea.

Albinik then said to the interpreter, pointing to the soldier with the axe, "Cæsar distrusts me; blessed be the gods for permitting me to prove the injustice of his suspicions. Do you see that islet yonder, a hundred oars' length from here?"

"Yes."

"There are but two passages to the bay, one at the right and the other at the left of this islet. The fate of the Roman fleet was in my hands; I might have piloted you into one of these passages, which nothing distinguishes by sight from the other, but in which an undercurrent would have drifted your galleys on the rocks, and not one would have escaped."

"What do you say?" exclaimed the interpreter, while Meroë looked with grief and surprise at her husband, who seemed to have abandoned his project of vengeance.

"I speak the truth," replied Albinik, "and I will prove it to you. This Irishman knows the dangers of the bay which he is quitting as well as I do; I will ask him to go before us as a pilot, and will mark out to you in advance the course that he will follow. In the first place, he will take the channel at the right of the islet, and will go straight forward almost to the point of land which you see yonder; then he will turn abruptly to the right till he is off those high black rocks which you see there. This channel passed and these rocks avoided, we shall be in safety in the bay. If the Irishman follows this course, step by step, will you still distrust me?"

"No, by Jupiter!" replied the interpreter. "It would be madness to have the least suspicion of you thenceforth."

"Try me, then," returned Albinik, addressing a few words to the Irishman, who consented to pilot the vessels. His course was precisely that marked out by Albinik. The latter, having given the Romans this pledge of sincerity, divided the fleet into three files, and guided them for some distance through the islets with which the bay is filled; then he ordered the oarsmen to rest on their oars. From the spot where they lay, it was impossible to see the Gallic fleet, which was anchored at the farthest part of the bay, scarcely two leagues off, but hidden from all eyes by a high promontory.

Albinik then said to the interpreter, "We have to encounter only one more danger, but that is a great one. There are quick-

sands before us, which sometimes change place with the tides, and in which the galleys may become imbedded; I must, therefore, go before and sound the passage, before piloting the fleet. Let the oarsmen lay on their oars in this spot; launch the smallest of your boats, with two oarsmen; my wife will steer; and if you still have any suspicion, you and the soldier with the axe can accompany me in the boat; then the passage once sounded, I will return on board the galley and pilot the fleet to the entrance of the harbor of Vannes."

"I no longer suspect you, for my part," replied the interpreter, "but by Cæsar's orders, neither I nor this soldier can quit you for an instant."

"Let it be as you desire," returned Albinik.

The small boat was immediately launched, two oarsmen entered it with the soldier and the interpreter, Albinik and Meroë embarked in turn, and the boat pushed off from the Roman fleet, which, drawn up in the form of a crescent, lay on its oars, awaiting the return of the pilot. Meroë, seated at the helm, steered the boat according to the directions of her husband, who, kneeling and bending over the prow, sounded the passage by means of a heavy plummet, fastened to a long, thick rope. The boat skirted one of the numerous islets of Morbihan Bay. Behind this islet stretched a long sandbank, which the ebbing tide was beginning to lay bare, then, beyond the sandbank, were some rocks bordering on the shore. Albinik had just cast the plummet anew; while he seemed to be examining the rope to ascertain the depth of the water, he exchanged a rapid glance with his wife, indicating to her by a look the soldier and the interpreter. Meroë understood his meaning. The interpreter was seated by her in the stern; then came the two oarsmen on their bench, and lastly the man with the axe, standing behind Albinik, who was leaning over the prow, plummet in hand. Suddenly rising, the latter transformed his plummet into a terrible weapon; giving it momentum by a rapid movement like a slinger, with the heavy lead attached to the string, he struck the soldier's casque so violently, that the latter fell in the bottom of the boat, stunned by the blow. The interpreter attempted to rush to his companion's aid, but Meroë seized him by the hair; he staggered backward, lost his balance, and fell into the sea. One of the oarsmen lifted his oar against Albinik, and was instantly struck down by the plummet. Meroë turned the rudder and steered the boat so near the islet that she and her husband easily leaped on shore, and both hastily climbed the steep rocks. There was nothing now between them and the mainland but a sandbank, part of which was left bare by the ebbing tide; but that this was quagmire was evident from the bubbles of air which continually appeared on the surface. To attempt to cross this bank, in order to reach the rocks of the coast, was to perish in the quagmire concealed beneath its deceitful sands. Already Albinik and Meroë heard, from the other side of the island, which was concealed from them by the rising ground, the cries of the soldier, who had recovered from his swoon, and the voice of the interpreter, who had doubtless been dragged from the water by the oarsmen. Albinik, who was accustomed to these parts, perceived from the coarseness of the gravel and the clearness of the water that covered it, that the sandbank was firm a little higher up. He therefore crossed in this place with Meroë, both wading in the water to the waist. They reached the rocks of the coast, scaled them lightly, and paused for a moment to see whether they were pursued.

The man with the axe, fettered by his heavy armor, and not being accustomed, any more than the interpreter, to walk on slippery stones, covered with sea-weed, like those of the island which they were forced to cross in order to reach the fugitives, after many efforts, at length arrived opposite the quicksands, left uncovered by the falling tide. The soldier, filled with anger at the sight of Albinik and his wife, who seemed separated from them only by a bar of fine, smooth sand, which the tide had left dry, believed it an easy matter to overtake them and rushed forward. At the first step he sank to the knees; he made a violent effort to extricate himself, and plunged in to the waist. He shouted to his companions for aid, but scarcely had he called when his body sank still deeper, till his head alone appeared above the gulf. This likewise disappeared; and a moment after naught was seen but one of his iron gauntlets, which he had raised to heaven as he sank, convulsively waving above the sands. Then nothing more was discerned—nothing but a few bubbles of water on the surface of the quagmire.

The oarsmen and the interpreter, struck with terror, stood motionless, not daring to brave certain death in the effort to overtake the fugitives. Albinik addressed the latter:

"Tell Cæsar that I mutilated myself to inspire him with confidence in my offers of service. It was my design to steer the fleet to certain destruction, and to share its fate, together with my wife. This was on the point of being accomplished. I was piloting you to that channel of perdition from which no vessel ever yet escaped, when we met the Irishman, who told me that the Gallic fleet had assembled yesterday, numerous and well armed, and was anchored

in this bay, two leagues from here. On learning this, I changed my plan, and no longer wished to wreck your galleys. They will be annihilated all the same, not by stratagem and treachery, but in fair fight, ship to ship, and Gaul to Roman. Now, as you are interested in to-morrow's battle, mark me well. I have designedly piloted your galleys to shallows, where in a few moments they will be left high and dry on the sand, for the tide is falling. To attempt to land is to rush into destruction, for you are surrounded on all sides with quicksands, like those which just swallowed up the soldier. Stay on board your ships till they are floated off to-morrow by the rising tide, and to-morrow we will have battle, battle to the death. The Gauls will have once more shown that never was Breton guilty of treachery, and that if he glories in the death of his enemy, it is when he has killed him in honorable combat."

Albinik and Meroë, leaving the interpreter stupefied by these words, proceeded in haste to the town of Vannes to give the alarm and to warn the Gallic fleet to prepare for the morrow's battle. On the way, Albinik's wife exclaimed, "The courage of my beloved husband is loftier than mine. I wished to see the Roman fleet destroyed by the rocks of the sea; my husband wishes to destroy it by Gallic valor. May I be forever proud of being the wife of such a man!"

This narrative, which your son Albinik, the sailor, sends to you, my mother Margarid, and to you my father Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, he has written on the night before the battle which is to take place to-morrow. Detained in the harbor of Vannes by the preparations on board his ship needful to fight the Romans at daybreak, your son sends this writing to the Gallic camp which defends the approach to the town by land. I know not whether my father and mother will blame or approve the conduct of Albinik and his wife Meroë, but this story contains the simple truth.

CHAPTER III.

On the eve of the battle of Vannes, Guilhern, the husbandman, makes a solemn promise to his father, Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak.—Position of the Gallic Army.—The Chief of the Hundred Valleys.—The Bards of War.—The cavalry of the Trimarkisia.—The iron chain of the two Saldunes.—The foot-soldier and the cavalryman.

On the eve of the battle of Vannes, which, fought by land and sea, was about to decide the slavery or liberty of Brittany, and consequently the subjugation or independence of all Gaul—on the eve of the battle of Vannes, in the presence of all the members of our family, assembled in the Gallic camp, except my brother Albinik and his wife Meroë, who were on board the fleet collected in Morbihan Bay, my father Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, said to me, his first-born, Guilhern the husbandman (who writes this narrative),

"To-morrow will be the day of a great battle, my son; we shall fight well; I am old and you are young; the angel of death will doubtless summon me first to depart, and perchance I shall go to-morrow to live elsewhere with my sainted daughter Hena. Now, this is what I ask of you, in the presence of the calamities which threaten our country, for to-morrow the evil chance of war may cause the Roman to triumph; it is my desire that the love of Gaul and the sacred memory of our fathers should not perish in our family, so long as our race shall endure. Should our children remain free, the love of country and the respect for the memory of their ancestors will render liberty still dearer to them. Should they live and die slaves, these sacred memories will repeat to them without ceasing, from generation to generation, that there was once a time when, faithful to the gods, valiant in battle, independent and happy, the master of its soil, rendered fertile by hard labor, and indifferent to death, of which it held the secret, the Gallic race was dreaded by the whole world, and hospitable to the nations who extended it a friendly hand; and these memories, perpetuated from age to age, by rendering slavery more horrible to our children, will some day give them the strength to break their bonds. In order that they may be transmitted from generation to generation, I ask you, my son, to promise me by Hesus to remain faithful to our old Gallic customs by preserving the deposit which I am about to intrust to you, adding to it yourself, and making your son Sylvest swear to add to it in his turn, in order that the sons of your grandsons may imitate their fathers, and that they may be imitated by their posterity. Behold this deposit. The first roll contains the narrative of what occurred in our family on the anniversary of the birthday of my beloved daughter Hena, which was also the day of her death. This other roll, which I received this evening at sunset from my son Albinik, the sailor, contains the story of his journey to the camp of Cæsar, through the countries burned by the inhabitants. This story does honor to Gallic courage; it does honor to your brother Albinik and his wife Meroë, faithful, perhaps to excess, to that maxim of our fathers—never was Breton guilty of treachery. These writings I intrust to you; you will return them to me after to-morrow's battle, should I survive; if not, you will keep them, or your brothers, should you

fall; and add to them the principal events of your life and that of your family. At your death, you will transmit them to your son, that he may transmit them in turn to his descendants; and so on from generation to generation. Do you swear by Hesus to obey my will?"

I, Guilhern the husbandman, answered, "I swear to my father Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, to accomplish his wishes."

These wishes I piously accomplish to-day, long after the battle of Vannes and the succeeding calamities without number. The story of these calamities I write for you, my son Sylvest. And it is not with blood that they should be written; no, not with blood, for blood may be drained dry, but with tears of grief, hatred, and rage, for their source is inexhaustible.

I will first relate what took place on the day of the battle of Vannes, after my poor, dear brother Albinik had piloted the fleet to Morbihan Bay.

This took place before my eyes. I saw it. Should I live here all the lives which I have to live elsewhere, throughout eternity, the memory of this terrible day would be present to me, as it is at this hour, as it always has been, and as it always will be.

My father Joel, my mother Margarid, my wife Henory, and my two children, Sylvest and Siomara, as well as my brother, Mikael the armorer, his wife Martha, and their children, to say nothing of our nearest kinsmen, had repaired, with all of our tribe, to the Gallic camp. Our chariots of war, covered with linen, had served us as tents till the day of the battle of Vannes. During the night, the council, convoked by the Chief of the Hundred Valleys and the Arch Druid Taliessin, had assembled. Mountaineers from Ares had been sent out the evening before, on their indefatigable ponies, as scouts through the burned districts. They hastened back at dawn, to say that six leagues from Vannes they had seen the fires of the Roman army, which had encamped for the night amidst the ruins of the town of Morhek. The Chief of the Hundred Valleys supposed that Cæsar, in order to escape the circle of destruction and famine which was closing around his army, had journeyed by forced marches through the devastated country, and come to offer battle to the Gauls. The council resolved to march to meet Cæsar, and to await him on the heights overlooking the river of Elrik. At daybreak, after the Druids had invoked the assistance of the gods, our tribe marched to take its place in the line of battle.

Joel, mounted on his proud stallion, Tom Bras, commanded the mahrek-hadroad* to which I belonged, with my brother Mikael, I as a cavalryman, he as a foot-soldier. According to military law, we were to fight side by side, he on foot and I on horseback, to aid each other mutually. In one of the chariots of war, armed with scythes and placed in the center of the army, with the reserve, stood my mother, my wife, the wife of Mikael, and our children. Several young lads, lightly armed, surrounded the chariots, and with difficulty held in check the great war-dogs, which, animated by the example of Deber Trud, the man-eater, howled and struggled, already scenting battle and carnage. Among the youths of our tribe I remarked two, who, like Julyan and Armel, were sworn saldunes. As was often done, wishing to unite not only their souls, but their bodies, and to be the more certain of sharing the same fate, they had fastened themselves together by an iron chain riveted to their brass belts; the symbol of the oath that bound them, this chain rendered them inseparable, living, wounded, or dead.

On our way to our post, we saw the Chief of the Hundred Valleys pass, at the head of a part of the Trimarkisia.* He was mounted on a superb black horse covered with scarlet housings. His armor was of steel; and his casque, of plated copper, as bright as silver, was surmounted by the emblem of Gaul—a gilded cock with half-spread wings. By the side of the chief rode a bard and a Druid, clad in long white robes striped with purple. They were unarmed; but, the battle once begun, despising danger, they placed themselves in the foremost rank, and encouraged the combatants by their words and war-songs.†

* A troop composed of cavalry (*mahrek*) and foot-soldiers (*droad*). "A certain number of Gallic cavalry," says Cæsar, "chose a like number of the most agile and daring foot-soldiers, each of which watched over his cavalryman and followed him in battle. If the cavalry were in danger, they fell back, and the foot-soldiers ran to their aid; if a wounded rider fell from his horse, the foot-soldier aided and defended him. If it became necessary to advance rapidly, or to make a precipitate retreat, exercise had rendered these foot-soldiers so agile, that, by clinging to the manes of the horses, they kept up with the riders in their march."

* "In this cavalry corps," says Amédée Thierry, in his *History of the Gauls*, "each horseman was followed by two squires mounted and armed, who remained in the rear of the corps. When the battle opened, if the horseman was dismounted the squires gave him one of their horses; if the horse and rider were both killed, or the horseman was wounded and carried off the battle-field by one of the squires, the other took his place in the ranks. This cavalry corps was called *Trimarkisia*, from two Gallic words signifying 'three horses.'"

† The bards, as we have said, formed part of the corporation of the Druids. "Art," says Jean Reynaud, "was represented alone by the bards among the Gauls, who had for them an unbounded attachment. They did not separate them from the other ministers of the Druidical religion; the celestial gift of inspiration appeared to them a sufficient consecration. They comprehended that he only is worthy of this sacred boon who employs its brilliant rays to encourage men in those efforts which constitute the nobility and sanctity of life. 'The bards,' says Lucan, 'delight in celebrating the glory of deeds of prowess; and by thus rendering heroes illustrious, they kindle in the hearts of men a desire to imitate these heroes, with the hope of some day having

The bard sang these words as the Chief of the Hundred Valleys passed before us:

"Cæsar has come against us. He asks in a loud voice, 'Will you be slaves; are you ready?' No, we will not be slaves; no, we are not ready. Gauls, children of the same race and united by one cause, let us raise our standards on the mountains and rush into the plain. Let us march, let us march against Cæsar; let us put both him and his army to the sword! Onward! on the Romans! on the Romans!'" And all hearts beat violently at these songs of the bard.

On passing before our tribe, at the head of which was my father, Joel, the Chief of the Hundred Valleys reined up his horse, and said:

"Friend Joel, when I was your guest, you asked my name; I told you that I should call myself soldier till Gaul was freed from its oppressors. The hour has come to show ourselves faithful to the motto of our fathers, 'In war there is but one alternative for the brave, to conquer or to perish.' May my devotion to our common country not be sterile! May Hesus protect our armies! Then perhaps the Chief of the Hundred Valleys will have effaced the stain on the name which he dares no longer bear.* Courage, friend Joel, the sons of your tribe are the bravest of the brave. I have seen two of your kinsmen, Julyan and Armel, fight after supper for amusement, through excess of valor. Your sainted daughter, Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sena, has offered her blood to Hesus. Brave, therefore, is your tribe, friend Joel; what blows will it strike to-day, when the salvation of Gaul is at stake!"

"My tribe will do its best and strike with all its might, rely on it, friend, as I called you in my house," answered my father. "We have not forgotten the song of the bards, which accompanied you, when you raised the first war-shout in Karnak forest: 'Strike the Roman; fell him to the earth! Strike harder, strike harder yet, strike the Roman!'"

And all the tribe of Joel joined with one voice in the chorus of the bards, "Strike! strike the Roman."

their praises likewise sung. These bards may be compared to Tyrtæus, who, by the power of his accents, like a god, adjudged the victory.' 'They force their enemies to listen to them as well as their friends,' says Diodorus Siculus; 'often, when the opposing ranks are already marching on each other with swords drawn and pikes fixed, the bards advance between the two armies and suspend the battle, holding the combatants enchained like wild beasts suddenly tamed by enchantment.' The aim of the bards was not to divert, by harmonious accents, the multitude idly assembled around them, for their pleasure; animated by religion, of which they felt themselves the ministers, they raised their eyes to heaven, and, followed by the charmed multitude, marched forward singing in the path marked out to them by the gods." "The Gauls also had their Pindars and their Tyrtæuses," says Latour d'Auvergne; "the bards or poets employed their genius in singing the deeds of great men in heroic verse, and keeping alive the love of glory in the hearts of the Gauls." "The Gauls think," says Nicholas of Damascus, quoted by Strabo, "that it is shameful to live subjugated, and that in war there is but one alternative for the brave—to conquer or to perish."

* Cæsar, in his Commentaries, and the historians after him, have mistaken the title of this Gallic hero for his own name, which they have corrupted to Vercingetorix, instead of Ver-cinn-cedo-righ, the Chief of the Hundred Valleys. As Amédée Thierry observes, in his History of the Gauls, Vercingetorix was the son of Celtil, who, guilty of conspiring against the liberty of his city, had expiated his ambition and crime on the funeral-pile. The heir to the property of his father, whose name he blushed to bear, since he is never found otherwise designated in history than by his martial title, the young Gaul, who became the idol of the people, traveled extensively. In the course of his wanderings, he visited Rome and saw Cæsar, who strove to attach him to himself; but the Gaul rejected the friendship of the enemy of his country. On returning home, he labored secretly among his friends to arouse the feeling of independence, and to raise up enemies to the Romans. When the time for summoning the people to arms had come, he appeared openly in the Druidical ceremonies, the political meetings, everywhere, in short, employing his eloquence, fortune, credit, and, in a word, every means in his power, among the chiefs and the populace, to induce them to regain the liberty of Gaul.

CHAPTER IV.

The chariot armed with scythes.—Margarid, Henory, Martha, and the other women and young girls of the family of Joel, prepare for battle.—Place of refuge for the little children.—The war-dogs.—The bards give the signal for battle.—Battle of Vannes.—The Thunderbolt.—The Iron Legion.—The Numidian horsemen.—The bards.—Guilhern the husbandman and Cæsar.—Death of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, and Mikael.—The Cretan archer and Deber Trud, the man-eater.—The two saldunes chained together.—Margarid, Henory and Martha.—The Gallic wives and maidens during the combat.—The chariot of death.

THE Chief of the Hundred Valleys departed in order to address a few words to each tribe. Before taking our posts in battle, at a distance from the chariots of war, in which were the women, young girls and children, my father, my brother and myself wished to assure ourselves for the last time that nothing was lacking for the defense of the chariot that bore our family. My mother, Margarid, as tranquil as when plying the distaff at our fireside, was standing, leaning against the oaken plank which formed the side of the chariot, directing my wife Henory and Martha, the wife of Mikael, to give more play to the leather straps which fastened the handles of the scythes. These scythes were then worked like oars fixed in the gunwale of a boat,* to pegs fixed in the sides of the chariot.

Several young girls and women of our kindred were occupied with other cares; some in the back of the chariot were pre-

* "The Gallic women," says Plutarch, "spring from the chariots of war upon the Romans, armed with swords and axes, gnashing their teeth with grief and rage, and uttering horrible cries; they strike alike the pursuers and the fugitives, the first as enemies and the last as traitors. Rushing into the thickest of the fight, they seize with their hands the swords of the Romans, wrest from them their bucklers, and are wounded and cut to pieces without falling back, giving proof till death of a truly invincible courage."

paring a recess by means of hides stretched on ropes, wherein our children would be sheltered from the stones and arrows launched by the enemy's slingers and archers. The children were already laughing and playing merrily in this scarcely finished corner. For still greater security, Mamm' Margarid, watchful over everything, ordered sacks filled with grain to be placed above this asylum. Other young girls were suspending on the inside of the chariot knives, swords and axes, which, in the hour of peril, their muscular white arms wielded with as much ease as a distaff. Two of their companions, kneeling by Mamm' Margarid, were opening chests of linen and preparing oil, balsam, salt and mistletoe-water, with which to dress wounds, after the example of the Druidesses, whose chariot, filled with stores for the succor of the wounded, was close by.

At our approach, the children rushed merrily from their retreat to the front of the chariot, stretching out their little hands. Mikael, being on foot, took his two little girls in his arms, while my wife Henory, to spare me the trouble of alighting from my horse, handed my little Sylvest and Siomara to me in turn from the chariot. I seated them both before me on the saddle, and kissed their fair heads with delight at the moment of going to battle. My father Joel then said to my mother:

"Margarid, if fate turns against us and the chariots are attacked by the Romans, do not let loose the war-dogs till the moment of assault; the brave animals will be the more furious for their long waiting, and will not wander away."

"Your advice shall be followed, Joel," answered Mamm' Margarid. "See now whether the scythes have sufficient play to allow us to work them easily."

"Yes, quite sufficient," replied my father, after examining part of them. Then, looking at the other side of the chariot, Joel exclaimed:

"Wife! wife! what have these young girls been thinking of? Ah! the heedless things! See here, on this side the scythe-blades are turned toward the front, and on the other toward the back."

"It was I that ordered them to be arranged thus," said my mother.

"And why are not all the scythe-blades turned the same way, Margarid?"

"Because a chariot is almost always attacked both in front and behind; in this case, the two rows of scythes, acting in opposite directions, are a better defense. My mother taught me this, and I have taught it to my daughters."

"Your mother's judgment was better than mine, Margarid; in this way, the reaping is more certain. Let the Romans attack the chariot, and heads and limbs will fall, mown down like ripe corn at harvest-time. Hesus grant that this human harvest may be abundant!"

Then, listening, my father said to Mikael and me, "Children, I hear the cymbals of the bards and the clarions of the trimarkisia. Let us rejoin our ranks. Come, Margarid, come my daughters; farewell till we meet again, here or elsewhere."

"Here or elsewhere, our fathers and husbands will find us pure and unsullied," replied my wife Henory, prouder and more beautiful than ever.

"Victorious or dead, you will see us again," added Madalen, a young maiden of sixteen; "but slaves or dishonored, no, by the glorious blood of our Hena, no, never!"

"No!" exclaimed Martha, the wife of Mikael, pressing to her breast her two children, whom my brother had just replaced in the chariot.

"These dear girls are of our race. Have no anxiety, Joel," said Mamm' Margarid, calm and grave as usual; "they will do their duty."

"As we shall do ours. Thus Gaul will be freed," replied my father. "Thou wilt also do thy duty, old man-eater, old Deber Trud," added the brenn, stroking the enormous head of the war-dog, which, in spite of his chain, had risen on his hind-feet, resting his fore-paws on the horse's shoulders "The hour of the quarry will soon come—a plentiful and gory quarry, Deber Trud. Her! her! at the Romans!"

While Deber Trud and the whole pack seemed to respond to these words by fierce growls, the brenn, my brother, and myself cast a last glance at our family; then my father turned the head of his proud stallion, Tom Bras, toward the ranks of the army, which he quickly rejoined. I followed my father, while Mikael, agile and robust, firmly grasping my horse's long and flowing mane, ran by my side, sometimes swinging his feet from the ground and allowing himself to be carried along for several paces by the horse at full gallop. Mikael and myself, like many others of our tribe, had accustomed ourselves in time of peace to the manly military exercise of the mahrek-hadroad. The brenn, my brother and myself, thus rejoined our tribe, and took our place in the ranks.

The Gallic army was drawn up on the top of a hill, a league distant from Vannes. On the east, our line of battle rested on Merek Forest, which was occupied by our best archers; on the west we were defended by the steep heights on the shore of Morbihan Bay. At the back of this bay was anchored our fleet, on board of which were my brother Albinik and his wife Meroë. Our ships were beginning to weigh their iron anchors, in order to fight the Roman galleys, which,

drawn up in the form of a crescent, were lying as motionless as a swan on the waters. Being no longer piloted by Albinik, the fleet of Cæsar, set afloat by the high tide, remained as he had left it, for fear of falling upon unknown shoals.

At our feet flowed the river of Roswallan, which the Romans must ford in order to reach us. The Chief of the Hundred Valleys had skillfully chosen his position; we had in front of us a river, behind us the town of Vannes, on the west the sea, and on the east the forest of Merek, with the abatises along its skirts, which presented insurmountable obstacles to the enemy's cavalry, and many dangers to his infantry, our archers being dispersed along these huge intrenchments.

The ground fronting us, on the other side of the river, was gently rising, and concealed from us the route by which the Roman army must come. Suddenly we saw the mountaineers, who had been sent out as scouts to apprise us of the enemy's approach, appear at the top of this hill and descend it at full speed. They forded the river, joined us, and announced the van-guard of the Roman army.

"Friends," said the Chief of the Hundred Valleys to each tribe, as he rode along the ranks, "remain motionless till the Romans assembled on the other side of the river begin to cross it; at that moment let the slingers and archers shower their stones and arrows upon the enemy; then, while the Romans, after crossing the river, are rallying their cohorts, let our whole line move, leaving the reserve with the chariots of war, and, the foot in the center and the horse at the wings, rush upon them like a torrent from the top of this steep hill; they will be unable to resist the impetuosity of our first shock, and will be driven back into the river."

The hill opposite ours was quickly covered with the numerous troops of Cæsar. In the van-guard marched the Vexillarii, distinguished by the lion's skin that covered their heads and shoulders; the veteran cohorts, renowned for their experience and intrepidity, such as the Thunderbolt, the Iron Legion, and many others, designated to us by the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, who had already fought the Romans, formed the reserve. We saw their armor and the distinctive standards of the legions—an eagle, a wolf, a dragon, a minotaur, and other figures of gilt bronze, adorned with leaves, glittering in the sun; and the wind wafted to our ears the piercing notes of their long clarions. Our hearts bounded at the sound of this martial music. A band of Numidian horsemen, wrapped in long white mantles, preceded the army, which halted for a moment. A great number of the Numidians rode at full speed to the bank of the river, entered it on horseback to assure themselves whether it was fordable, and advanced toward us, despite the missiles showered on them by our slingers and archers. We saw more than one white mantle floating on the current of the river, and more than one riderless horse climb the bank and return to the Romans. Several of the horsemen, however, in spite of the stones and arrows that were hurled at them, crossed the river again and again, displaying so much bravery, that our archers and slingers ceased their missiles with common accord, to do honor to this excess of valor. Courage in our enemies pleases us; they are the more worthy of our steel. The Numidians, assured that the passage was fordable, hastened to carry the news to the Roman army. The legions at once formed into several deep columns, and began to cross the river. According to the orders of the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, our archers and slingers recommenced their fire, while the Cretan archers and the slingers from the Balearic Isles, deployed on the opposite bank, replied to our men.

"My sons," said my father, looking toward Morbihan Bay, "your brother Albinik is about to fight by sea while we fight by land. Look! our fleet has come up with the Roman galleys."

Mikael and I looked in the direction pointed out to us, and saw in the distance our ships, with their heavy sails of tanned skins, rigged with iron chains, boarding the Roman galleys. My father spoke truly; the battle opened at once on the sea and the land. From this double combat would ensue the independence or the subjugation of Gaul. I observed something which seemed to me an inauspicious omen: we, usually so talkative and jovial in the hour of danger, jeering at our enemies or jesting at our danger, were all grave and silent, yet resolved to conquer or to perish.

The signal for battle was given, the cymbals of the bards responded to the Roman chorus, and the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, alighting from his horse, stepped a few paces before the ranks, with several Druids and bards at his side; then, brandishing his sword, he rushed down the steep descent. The Druids and bards kept pace with him, striking their golden harps. At this signal, our whole army precipitated itself after them upon the Romans, who, having just crossed the river, were reorganizing their cohorts.

The mahrek-hadroad of the tribes in the neighborhood of Karnak, under the command of my father, rushed with the rest of the army down the side of the hill. My brother Mikael, brandishing his sword in his right hand, clung with his left to my horse's mane during the rapid descent. At the bottom of the hill I saw the Roman

corps styled the Iron Legion, on account of its heavy armor, drawn up in the form of a wedge. As motionless as a wall of steel, bristling with pikes, it was prepared to receive our shock on the point of its lances. I was armed, like all our horsemen, with a sword at my left, an axe at my right, and a heavy barbed spear in my hand. We wore a fur cap for a casque, and a jacket of boar's hide for a cuirass, and our legs were protected below our braga by leather leggins. Mikael was armed with a barbed spear and a sword, and carried a light shield on his left arm.

"Jump up behind!" said I to my brother, at the moment when our horses, over which we had lost all control, rushed at full speed on the lances of the Iron Legion. Once within reach, we hurled our barbed spears with all our might at the heads of the Romans. My blow descended heavily on the casque of a legionary, who fell backward, carrying with him the soldier in his rear; while my horse, by the opening thus made, rushed into the thickest of the Iron Legion. Others imitated my example, and the struggle became fierce. My brother Mikael remained constantly by my side; sometimes leaping upon my horse in order to strike higher, sometimes making of it a rampart, and always fighting valiantly. Once I was nearly dismounted; he protected me with his arm till I regained my seat in the saddle. The other foot-soldiers of the mahrek-hadroad fought in the same manner, each by the side of his horseman.

"Brother, you are wounded," said I to Mikael. "See! your sagum is stained with blood."

"And you, brother," he answered; "look at your bloody braga."

Indeed, in the heat of the fight, neither of us felt these wounds. My father, being the chief of the mahrek-hadroad, was not accompanied by a foot-soldier. Twice we met him in the fray; despite his age, his still vigorous arm dealt unceasing blows, and his heavy battle-axe fell on the iron armor like a hammer on an anvil. His stallion, Tom Bras, fiercely bit all the Romans within his reach; once he seized one of them by the nape of his neck, and, rearing, raised him from the ground and shook him till the blood gushed from his mouth. Afterward, the tide of battle swept us again near our father, who was already wounded; I felled one of his assailants to the ground and trampled him under my horse's feet; then we were separated anew. We knew nothing of the other movements of the battle; engaged with the Iron Legion, our only thought was to drive it into the river. We pressed it hard; already our horses stumbled over heaps of the dead; and we heard not far from us the piercing voice of the bards, singing in the midst of the fray: "Victory to Gaul! Liberty, liberty! One more blow of the axe! One more effort! Strike, Gauls, strike, and the Roman is conquered and Gaul freed! Liberty! liberty! Strike the Romans! Strike harder yet! Strike, ye Gauls!" The songs of the bards and their predictions of victory redoubled our courage. The wrecks of the Iron Legion, which was almost annihilated, recrossed the river in disorder. We saw a Roman cohort, struck with panic, rush toward us, utterly routed. Our troops, stationed on the top of the hill, galloped down in pursuit of it, and, thus attacked in front and rear, it was cut to pieces. Our hands were weary with slaying, when I observed a Roman warrior, of middle stature, whose magnificent armor denoted that he was of high rank; he was on foot, and had lost his casque in the fray. His high, bald forehead, pale countenance, and terrible glances gave him a menacing air; with drawn sword, he was furiously striking his own men, unable to arrest their flight. I pointed him out to Mikael, who had just rejoined me.

"Guilhern," said he, "if the Romans are defeated everywhere as they are here, we are victorious. This warrior must be a general, judging from his steel armor, inlaid with gold; let us take him prisoner, he will make a good hostage. Aid me, and we will have him."

Mikael ran forward, and fell on the warrior just as he was attempting to stop the fugitives. In an instant, I overtook my brother. After a brief struggle, he threw the Roman to the ground. Wishing to keep him as a prisoner, instead of killing him, he placed his knee on his breast and lifted his axe as a sign to him to surrender. Understanding his meaning, the Roman ceased to struggle, and raised his hand to heaven to call the gods to witness that he surrendered himself a prisoner.

"Carry him off the field," said my brother. Mikael, who, like me, was very tall and robust, while our prisoner was fragile and of middle stature, seized him in his arms, and lifted him from the ground; I caught him by the collar of a buff coat which he wore under his armor, and, drawing him toward me, threw him across my saddle; then taking the reins between my teeth, in order to be able to hold the prisoner with one hand and to threaten him with my axe with the other, I carried him off in this manner, and, pressing the flanks of my horse, I galloped toward the reserve corps, in order to put my hostage in a place of safety, and to have my wounds dressed. I had proceeded but a few steps, when I met one of our horsemen in pursuit of the fugitives, who, recognizing the Roman whom I had captured, cried out to me, "It is Cæsar! Strike him; fell him to the earth!" I thus learned that I was

carrying off on my horse the greatest enemy of Gaul; but, far from thinking of killing him, I was seized with stupefaction, my axe fell from my hand, and I threw myself back, the better to contemplate this dreaded Cæsar, whom I held in my power. Woe to me! woe to my country! Cæsar took advantage of my stupid astonishment, leaped from my horse, and called to his aid a body of Numidian cavalry, which was in search of him. When I was conscious of my criminal folly, it was too late to repair it.* Cæsar had sprung on the horse of one of the Numidians, while the others surrounded me. Furious at having suffered Cæsar to escape, I defended myself to the last extremity. I received fresh wounds, and saw my brother Mikael killed at my side. This calamity was followed by others. The battle, hitherto favorable to our arms, turned against us. Cæsar rallied his broken legions, a considerable number of fresh troops came to his aid, and we were driven back in disorder on our reserve corps, where our chariots of war, with our wounded, our wives and our children, were stationed. Hurried forward by the tide of battle, I came near the chariots of war, rejoiced, at least in defeat, to be by my mother and kindred, and able to defend them if strength was left me, for the blood that flowed from my wounds enfeebled me more and more. Alas! the gods had condemned me to a horrible trial. I can say, with my brother Albinik and his wife, both of whom were killed in the attack on the Roman galleys, fighting on the sea as we fought on the land, for the liberty of our unhappy country, none ever yet beheld or will ever more witness the terrible sight that met my eyes!

Driven back toward the chariots, fighting all the way, and attacked at once by the Numidian cavalry, the infantry legions and the Cretan archers, we gave way step by step. Already I heard the bellowing of the bulls, the tinkling of the brass bells suspended from their yokes, and the barking of the war-dogs, still chained around the chariots. Sparing my failing strength, I no longer sought to fight, but strove to reach the place where my family was in danger. Suddenly my horse, which was already wounded, received a mortal thrust in the side, and fell upon me. My leg and thigh, pierced with two wounds, were crushed, as if in a vice, between the ground and the lifeless body. I was endeavoring to rise, when one of our horsemen, who was following me, stumbled over my dying steed, and fell on it with his horse. Both were instantly pierced by the lances of the legionaries. The resistance became desperate; corpses upon corpses were heaped upon and around me. More and more weakened by the loss of blood, overcome by the pain of my limbs, crushed beneath the dead and dying, and incapable of moving a muscle, my consciousness abandoned me, my eyes closed, and when, recalled to my senses by the acute agony of my wounds, I opened them again, this is what I beheld, at first believing myself a prey to one of those frightful dreams which we vainly seek to escape by an awakening that eludes us. Yet it was not a dream. No, it was not a dream, but a horrible, horrible reality:

Twenty paces from me, I saw the chariot of war, with my mother, my wife Henory, Martha, the wife of Mikael, our children, and several young girls and women of our family. A number of our kinsmen and tribe, who had hastened, like me, toward the chariots, were defending them against the Romans. Among our friends, I recognized the two saldunes, attached together by an iron chain in token of their fraternal friendship; both young, beautiful and valiant, like Armel and Julyan. With their clothes torn to shreds, their heads and breasts bare and already stained with blood, their eyes sparkling with rage, and a disdainful smile on their lips, they were intrepidly fighting with their barbed spears the Roman legionaries, cased in iron, and the Cretan archers in their leather coats and leggins. The great war-dogs, which had doubtless just been unchained, sprang at the throats of the assailants, often overthrowing them by their furious dash; their teeth being unable to penetrate either casque or cuirass, they bit the faces of their victims, and suffered themselves to be killed on their bodies rather than let go their hold. The Cretan archers, who were almost without defensive armor, were seized by the legs, arms, body, and shoulders, and each bite of the ferocious animals tore away a shred of bloody flesh.

A few paces from me, I saw an archer, of gigantic stature, calmly choose from his quiver his sharpest arrow, place it on his bowstring, bend the bow with a vigorous arm, and take aim at one of the saldunes, who, dragged to the earth by the weight of his brother-in-arms who had fallen dead, could only fight on one knee, yet so valiantly, that for some moments no one dared brave his barbed spear, which he swung around him, and each blow of which was mortal. The Cretan archer waited for the opportune moment, and had just taken aim at the saldune, when I saw old Deber Trud bound forward. Fastened to the spot by

* This event is related by Cæsar himself, who says that, by way of bravado, one of the Gallic horsemen called to his captor, *Ceco Cæsar*, "Let Cæsar go." Latour d'Auvergne says that Cæsar probably mistook the Gallic word *sko*, strike, kill, for *ceco*, let go; and that he probably owed his safety to the stupefaction of his conqueror, who was struck with amazement at the sound of this dreaded name.

the heap of dead that was crushing me, and unable to stir without suffering intense anguish from my wounded thigh, I summoned up strength enough to shout, "At him, Deber Trud, at the Roman!"

The dog, excited by my voice, which he knew, sprang on the Cretan archer just as his arrow sped from the bow, and, whizzing through the air, pierced the breast of the saldune. At this new wound, the eyes of the youth closed, his stiffening arm dropped the spear, the knee upon which he supported himself gave way, and his body sank; but, by a last effort, he raised himself again, and, plucking the arrow from his breast, hurled it at the Roman legionaries, crying, with a strong voice and a mocking smile, "Take this, ye cowards, who shelter your fear and skin beneath iron armor. The Gaul's cuirass is his breast."* With these words, the saldune fell dead on the body of his brother-in-arms.

Both were avenged by Deber Trud. He threw down and held in his enormous paws the Cretan archer, who uttered frightful cries; but the war-dog fixed his formidable teeth so deeply in the throat of his victim, that the hot blood spouted on my face, and the Cretan, though not dead, was unable to cry out. Deber Trud, feeling his prey still alive, fell on him with furious growls, and tore off pieces of his flesh, which he threw on either side. I heard the Cretan's ribs crackle in the terrible fangs of the dog, who buried his jaws so deep in his gory breast, that I could see naught but his glaring eyes. A legionary rushed forward and pierced him through twice with his lance. Deber Trud did not utter a single groan; he died like a good war-dog, with his monstrous head buried in the entrails of the Roman."†

After the death of the two saldunes, the defenders of the chariot fell one by one. I then saw my mother, Henory, Martha, and our young kinswomen, their eyes and cheeks inflamed, their hair disheveled, their clothing disordered by the combat, and their arms and bosoms half uncovered, rush intrepidly from one end of the chariot to the other, encouraging the combatants by voice and gesture, and hurling at the Romans, with a muscular arm, short barbed spears, knives, and axes. At length, the final moment arrived; all our kinsmen were slain, and the chariot, buried to the hubs in heaps of dead, was defended only by my mother, our wives, and female relatives. It was about to be attacked. There were with Margarid five young wives and six youthful maidens, almost all of superb beauty, rendered still more brilliant by the excitement of battle.

The Romans, sure of their prey for their debauches, and wishing to take it alive, consulted together before attacking the chariot. I did not understand their words, but from their coarse laughter and the licentious glances which they cast on the Gallic women, I had no doubts as to the fate that awaited them. And I was there—crushed, helpless, breathless, filled with despair, terror, and impotent rage—seeing a few paces from me this chariot with my mother, wife, and children! The wrath of Heaven had fallen on me. Like one who is unable to awake from a terrible dream, I was condemned to see and hear everything, unable to move.

An officer, of insolent and ferocious appearance, advanced alone toward the chariot, and addressed to the women a few words in the Roman tongue, which the other soldiers welcomed with insulting laughter. My mother, calm, pale, and terrible, seemed to advise the women around her not to stir. The Roman added a few words, ending with an obscene gesture. Margarid held a heavy axe in her hand; she hurled it at the officer's head with so true an aim that he reeled backward and fell. His fall gave the signal for attack; the soldiers rushed forward to assault the chariot. The Gallic women flew to the scythes which defended the chariot on each side, and caused the blades to revolve with such rapidity that, after seeing many of their number killed or disabled, the Romans, for a moment terrified by the ravages of these terrible weapons, so intrepidly handled, suspended the attack. They soon returned to the charge, however, and, making use of the long lances of the legionaries as levers, succeeded in breaking the handles of the scythes while remaining beyond their reach. These weapons destroyed, a new attack was about to be made, the issue of which was no longer doubtful. As the last scythes fell before the blows of the soldiers, I saw my mother speak to Henory and to Martha, the wife of Mikael. Both ran to the corner where our children were sheltered. I shuddered, in spite of myself, on seeing the fierce and determined air with which my wife and Martha rushed toward this retreat. Margarid also spoke to the three young wives who had no children, who, together with the young girls, took her hands and kissed them piously.

At this moment, the last scythes, which had been abandoned by the Gauls, fell beneath the blows of the Romans. My mother seized a sword in one hand and a white vail in the other, and, advancing to the front of the chariot, waved the vail and

* Cæsar says of this heroic battle: "During the combat, which lasted from the seventh hour of the day till night, not a Gaul was seen to turn his back."

† "When the Romans approached the chariots of war," says Pliny, "they were assailed by a new enemy—the war-dogs, which were with great difficulty exterminated by the archers."

flung the sword away, as if to inform the enemy that the women wished to surrender themselves prisoners. This resolution surprised and terrified me. For these young and beautiful women to surrender was to submit to slavery and to the vilest outrages, more horrible than servitude and death. The soldiers, at first astonished at the proposed surrender, replied by a laugh of ironical consent. Margarid appeared to be waiting for a signal; twice she looked impatiently toward the recess where our children were sheltered, and where my wife and Martha had gone. The signal not coming, she doubtless wished to divert the attention of the enemy, and waved the white vail anew, pointing in turn to Vannes and the sea.

The soldiers, not understanding the meaning of these gestures, looked questioningly at each other. My mother, after glancing again toward the recess where Henory and Martha had disappeared, exchanged a few words with the young women about her, seized a dagger, and, with the rapidity of lightning, stabbed, one after another, the three virgins who stood beside her, and who, half-opening their dresses, offered their chaste bosoms to the blow. Meanwhile, the other Gallic women had slain each other with a swift and sure hand. Just as they rolled to the bottom of the chariot, Martha, my brother's wife, issued proudly and calmly from the hiding-place of our children, with her two little girls in her arms. A spare pole was fastened upright at the end of the chariot where Margarid was standing. With one bound, Martha sprang on the side of the chariot; and then only I remarked that she had a rope around her neck. Martha passed the end of the rope through the ring of the shaft; my mother seized it and clung to it with all her might; Martha sprang forward with extended arms, and was strangled in the fall. Her two little girls, instead of falling to the ground, remained suspended on each side of their mother's breast, both strangled like her with the same rope, which she had passed last around her own neck, after fastening it round that of her children.*

All this took place so quickly, that the Romans, at first struck motionless with stupefaction and fear, had not time to prevent these heroic deaths. They had scarcely recovered from their surprise, when my mother Margarid, seeing all her children dying or dead at her feet, exclaimed in a firm and calm voice, raising her bloody knife to heaven:

"No, our daughters shall not be outraged—no, our children shall not be slaves! All we of the family of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, who has died like his kinsmen for the liberty of Gaul, are going to meet him in another world. All this bloodshed will perhaps appease thee, O Hesus!" With these words, my mother stabbed herself with a firm hand.

Lying all this time in front of this chariot of death, and not seeing my wife Henory come from the recess where she must be with my two children, and where she had doubtless killed herself, like her sisters, after putting to death my little Sylvest and Siomara—I was seized with giddiness; my eyes closed, I felt myself dying, and I thanked Hesus from the bottom of my soul for not leaving me here alone, when all my friends had gone to live elsewhere, in unknown worlds.

But, no; it was fated that I should live here on earth, since I have survived so many sorrows!

CHAPTER V.

Slavery.—Guilhern in chains.—The slave-dealer.—Skin-and-Bone.—The number, name, and description under which Guilhern was to be sold.—His fears lest his two children, Sylvest and Siomara, might have escaped death in the chariot of war.—Fate of slave children.—Guilhern hears from the slave-dealer the story of Lord Trymalcion, a rich old man, who was in the habit of buying children.—Guilhern's horror at these abominations.

After seeing my mother and the women of my family and tribe in the chariot of war kill themselves and each other, to escape the shame and outrage of slavery, the loss of blood deprived me of all consciousness, and a considerable time passed before I fully recovered my senses. When they returned, I found myself lying on a heap of straw, with a great number of men, in an immense stable. At my first movement, I felt myself chained by the leg to a stake fixed in the ground. I was half naked; they had only left me my shirt and braga, in a secret pocket of which were hidden the writings of my father and my brother Albinik, the sailor, as well as the little golden sickle of my sister Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sena. My wounds had been dressed, and I scarcely felt them; I experienced only an extreme weakness and giddiness, which rendered my memory confused. I looked around me; there were, perhaps, fifty wounded prisoners of us, all chained on their litters; at the other end of

* "The most tragical scenes imaginable were witnessed. The Gallic women, clad in black, stood in the chariots of war; taking their little children, they strangled them with their own hands, or threw them beneath the wheels of the chariots or under the feet of the horses, and then killed themselves. One of them hung herself from the pole of her chariot, after tying two of her children to her feet. In default of trees whereon to hang themselves, the men passed a running knot round their necks, and fastened it to the horns and legs of the oxen; then pricking the animals to make them go forward, they perished, trampled under foot or strangled."

the stable were several armed men, who did not seem to me to belong to the regular Roman troops, seated around a table, drinking and singing. Some of them left the group from time to time, and walked about unsteadily, as though intoxicated, with a short whip in their hand, composed of several leather thongs, leaded at the ends, casting mocking looks at the prisoners. By my side was an old man with white hair and beard, extremely pale and emaciated, with his forehead half concealed by a bloody bandage. He sat with his elbows on his knees and his face buried in his hands. Seeing him wounded and a prisoner, I thought him a Gaul; I was not mistaken. "My good father," said I, touching him lightly on the arm, "where are we?"

The old man, lifting his gloomy and dejected face, answered with an air of compassion, "This is the first time you have spoken for two days."

"For two days!" I cried, greatly astonished, unable to believe that such a length of time had passed since the battle of Vannes, and seeking to collect my vague memories; "is it possible that I have been here two days?"

"Yes; and you have constantly been delirious, seeming not to know what was passing around you. The physician that dressed your wounds gave you potions to drink—"

"Now I remember it confusedly, and also a journey in a wagon."

"Yes, from the field of battle to this place. I was with you in the wagon when you were brought here."

"And where are we?"

"At Vannes."

"Where is our army?"

"Destroyed."

"And our fleet?"

"Annihilated."*

"Oh! my brother and his courageous wife Meroë are also both dead," I thought. "Is Vannes, where we are, likewise in the power of the Romans?" I asked the old man.

"Yes, together with all Brittany," he replied.

"Where is the Chief of the Hundred Valleys?"

"He has taken refuge in the mountains of Ares, with a small body of horsemen. The Romans are in pursuit of him," replied the old man; then, raising his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "May Hesus and Teutates protect this last defender of Gaul!"

I had asked these questions in proportion as my memory returned to me; but when I recollected the battle of the chariot of war, the death of my mother, my father, my brother Mikael, his wife and two children, and, lastly, the almost certain death of my wife Henory and my son and daughter—for when I lost my consciousness I had not seen Henory come out of the recess in the back of the chariot, where I supposed that she had killed herself after killing our children—on remembering all this, in spite of myself I uttered a wild shriek of despair on seeing myself left alone here, while all my family had gone to another world; then, to escape the light of day, I threw myself face downward on the straw. One of the half-drunken keepers was offended at my groans, and several sharp lashes rained on my shoulders, accompanied with imprecations. Forgetting grief for shame that I, Guilhern, the son of Joel, should be lashed with the whip, I sprang to my feet with one bound, forgetful of my weakness, and was about to rush on the keeper, when my chain stopped me short, and made me stagger and fall on my knees. The keeper, beyond arm's length, redoubled his blows, striking my face, breast, and back; while others rushed toward me, and, throwing me down, handcuffed my wrists.

(My son, O my son! thou for whom I write this, faithful to the last wishes of my father, never forget, and let thy sons never forget, this outrage—the first ever endured by our race. Live to avenge this outrage in due time; and in default of thee, let thy sons avenge it on the Romans!)

Powerless to move, with my feet chained and my wrists handcuffed, I would not delight my tormentors by my impotent rage. I closed my eyes and lay motionless, betraying neither anger nor pain, while my keepers, incensed at my calmness, beat me with greater fury. Suddenly, a voice addressed some sharp words to them in the Roman tongue, whereupon their blows ceased. I opened my eyes and saw three new personages, one of which was gesticulating with an angry air, speaking rapidly to the keepers and pointing at me from time to time. This man was short and fat, with an extremely red face, white hair, and a pointed gray beard. He was not dressed in the Roman fashion, but wore a short brown woolen robe, deer-skin leggins, and leather gaiters, and was accompanied by two men, one of whom, clad in a long black robe, had a grave and sinister air; the other carried a box under his arm. While I was looking at these personages, the old man, my neighbor, who was chained like me, looked at the short fat man with a red face and white hair, who was talking with the keepers, and said to me, with an air of anger and disgust, "The mangone—the mangone!"

* "The Gallic fleet," says Cæsar, "was completely destroyed in Morbihan Bay. The defeat of the Gallic vessels resulted from an extremely dangerous invention of the Romans, who, by means of sharp scythes with long handles, cut the cordage of the sails, so that they fell, and the Gallic vessels, deprived of sails and rigging, were unable to maneuver."

"What," answered I, without understanding him, "what is the mangone?"

"The man that has bought us; it is the name that the Romans give to slave-traders."

"What! buy the wounded—buy the dying!" said I to the old man, with surprise.

"Do you not know that after the battle of Vannes," replied he, with a gloomy smile, "there remained more dead than living, and not a Gaul without a wound? On these wounded men, in default of sounder prey, the slave-traders who follow in the wake of the Roman army pounced like vultures on corpses."

I had no more doubts; I was a slave. I had been bought, and would be sold again. The slave-dealer, having finished his conversation with the keepers, approached the old man and said to him in the Gallic tongue, but with an accent that proved his foreign origin, "Well, old Skin-and-bone, what has happened to your neighbor? Has he come to his senses at last? Has he moved or spoken?"

"Question him yourself," returned the old man, abruptly turning over on the straw; "he will answer you."

The slave-trader came round to my side. He no longer appeared angry; his naturally jovial countenance unbent, and he stooped over me, resting his elbows on his knees, smiled at me, and began to talk very fast, putting questions which he often answered himself.

"So you have come to your senses, my brave Bull? Yes; so much the better. By Jupiter! it is a good sign. Now get an appetite—and you will, of course—and in a week you will be in full feather. So those brutes of keepers have been whipping you? Yes. That does not astonish me; they know no better. This Gallic wine makes them stupid. To beat you, when you can scarcely stand on your feet, to say nothing of the bad effect that suppressed anger has on the Gauls! But you are no longer angry, are you? No? So much the better; it is I that should be angry at those drunkards. What if the excitement had opened your wounds and killed you! But, bah! those brutes think nothing of making me lose twenty-five or thirty aurei,* which you will soon be worth to me, my brave Bull! But, for greater safety, I will take you to a place where you will be alone and more comfortable than you are here. It was occupied by a wounded man who died last night; a fine fellow—a superb fellow! Ah! he was a loss; but trade is not all profit. Come, follow me."

With these words, he unfastened my chain by means of a hidden spring. I wondered why the slave-trader always called me Bull. I should, moreover, have preferred the keeper's whip to the jovial loquacity of this dealer in human flesh. Although convinced that I was not dreaming, it was hard to believe in the reality of what I saw. Unable to resist, I followed the man; at least, I thought, I should no longer have before my eyes those keepers who had beaten me, and the sight of whom made my blood boil. I made an effort to rise, for my weakness was still great.

The slave-dealer unfastened my chain and took one end of it, and as my wrists were still handcuffed, the man in the long black robe and his companion with the box took me each by the arm and led me to the end of the stable, where we ascended a few steps and entered a little room lighted by a grated opening. I looked out and recognized the public square of Vannes, and in the distance the house where I had often visited my brother Albinik, the sailor, and his wife Meroë. The room was furnished with a stool, a table, and a long box filled with fresh straw, in the place, I thought, of that on which the other slave had died. I was first made to seat myself on the stool. The man in the black robe, who was a Roman physician, then examined my wounds, talking meanwhile in his own tongue with the slave-dealer; then taking different kinds of balsams from the box carried by his companion, he applied them to my hurts, and departed to give his cares to the other slaves, after aiding the slave-dealer to fasten my chain to the wooden box which served as my bed. I remained alone with my master.

"By Jupiter!" said he, with a satisfied and jovial air which aroused my indignation; "your wounds are healing fast, a proof of the purity of your blood; and with pure blood wounds are nothing, says the son of Esculapius. But now that you have come to your senses, you will answer my questions—eh, brave Bull? Yes. That is right. Listen to me." And taking from his pocket a set of waxed tablets and a stylus, he continued, "I do not ask your name; you have no name but that which I have given you, and which you will keep till a new owner gives you another. I have called you Bull—a proud name, isn't it? Does it suit you? So much the better."

"Why do you call me Bull?"

"Why do I call that tall old man, who was your neighbor just now, Skin-and-bone? Because his bones are coming through his skin, while you, apart from your two wounds, are strong and vigorous. What a chest! what a waist! what breadth of shoulders! what stalwart limbs!" And as he spoke, the slave-dealer rubbed his hands, looking at me with satisfaction

* Or from a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five dollars—the usual price of a slave. The aureus was worth a little less than five dollars.

and greed, and thinking already what a price I would bring. "And what a stature! It exceeds by more than a hand's breadth that of the tallest captive in my lot! On seeing you so robust, therefore, I called you Bull.* It is by this name that you are inscribed in my inventory, opposite your number, and that you will be sold at auction."

I knew that the Romans sold their prisoners to slave-dealers; I knew that slavery was horrible since I thought it right that a mother should kill her children rather than let them live in captivity; I knew that the slave became a beast of burden—yes, I knew all this; nevertheless, while the slave-dealer spoke to me in this manner, I passed my hand across my forehead and touched myself to be sure that it was really I, Guilhern, the son of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak—I, of a proud and free race, that was treated like a bull destined for market. This shame—this life of slavery seemed to me so impossible to endure that I reassured myself, resolving to escape on the first opportunity, or to end my life with my own hands and rejoin my kindred. This thought calmed me. I neither hoped nor wished to learn that my wife and children had escaped death in the chariot of war; but remembering that I had seen neither Henory nor my little Sylvest and Siomara come from the recess in the back of the chariot, I said to the slave-dealer, "Where did you buy me?"

"In the place where we always make our purchases, my brave Bull, on the field of battle, after the combat."

"Then it was on the battle-field of Vannes that you bought me?"

"Yes."

"And you doubtless took me from the spot where I had fallen?"

"Yes, there was a great heap of you Gauls there, in which there was nothing worth picking up but you and three others, including that old man, your neighbor, Skin-and-bone, you know, whom the Cretan archers gave me in the bargain. That is the way with you Gauls; you let yourselves be butchered in such a manner (and, by Jupiter! I don't know what you gain by it) that, after a battle, a captive without wounds is not to be had at any price. For my part, I have not much money at my disposal; so I fall back on the badly wounded. My colleague, a son of Esculapius, goes over the battle-field with me, examines the wounds, and guides my choice. Do you know what the worthy physician said to me the other day, in spite of your swoon, and your two wounds? After examining and probing them, 'Buy this man, my colleague, buy him,' said he; 'nothing but the flesh is injured, and that is healthy; it will depreciate his value but little, and run no risk of invalidating the sale.'* Then, you see, like a shrewd dealer that understands his trade, I said to the Cretan archers, turning you over with my foot, 'As to this great body, there is scarcely a breath of life in it—I do not want it in my lot.'"†

"When I bought cattle at the market," said I mockingly to the slave-dealer—for I was growing more and more tranquil, knowing that man is freed by death—"when I bought cattle at the market, I was less shrewd than you are."

"Oh! I am an old dealer, and understand my trade. The Cretan archers, seeing that I depreciated your value, replied, 'But this lance-thrust and sword-cut are nothing but scratches.' 'Scratches, my masters,' said I; 'why thump him, kick him (and I thumped and kicked you lustily); 'do you see; he shows no signs of life; he is dying, my noble sons of Mars; he is cold already.' In fine, my brave Bull, I got you for two aurei."

"I think myself bought cheaply; but to whom will you sell me again?"

"To the traders from Italy and Southern Roman Gaul; they buy slaves from us at second-hand. Several of them are here already."

"And will they carry me far away?"

"Yes, unless you should be bought by one of those old Roman officers who, being too great invalids to continue to fight, will found military colonies here, by the order of Cæsar."

"And thus rob us of our lands?"

"Naturally; I hope, therefore, to get for you twenty-five or thirty aurei at least, and more, if you have a good trade, such as the carpenter's, mason's, goldsmith's, or some other. It is to learn this that I question you, so that I can write your calling in my inventory. We will say, therefore," and the slave-dealer took up his tablets, on which he wrote with his stylus, "your name is *Bull, of the Breton Gauls.* I see this at a glance; I am a connoisseur; I never mistake a Breton for a Burgundian, or a Poitevin for an Auvergnat. I sold a great many Auvergnats last year after the battle of Puy. What is your age?"

"Twenty-nine."

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* "The slaves," says Gwin, "had no proper name; all kinds of names, even those of animals, were given them indiscriminately."

* A few old men who were naught but skin and bone (called *coemptionales*) were given in the bargain to the purchaser of a lot of slaves. (See Plautus and Terence.)

† According to Wallon, in the sale of slaves, as in that of animals, there were certain defects which invalidated the sale or reduced the value. Dumbness, deafness, near-sightedness, tertian or quartan ague, epilepsy, polypus, varicose veins, a breath indicating some internal malady, and sterility in women, such were the defects which annulled the sale. As to moral defects, no provision was made for them. The slave-dealer, however, could not ascribe to the slave good qualities that he did not possess. He was required, above all, to confess if the slave was inclined to suicide.

"Age, twenty-nine," he wrote on his tablets. "Your vocation?"

"A husbandman."

"A husbandman!" returned the slave-dealer, with a crestfallen air, scratching his ear with the stylus, "What! nothing but a husbandman! Have you no other calling?"

"I am likewise a soldier."

"Oh! a soldier—he that wears the iron collar never touches land or sword. So, this is all," said he, reading, with a sigh, from his tablets, "Number 7, Bull, a Breton Gaul, of prodigious strength and stature; age, twenty-nine; an excellent husbandman. What is your character?" he added.

"My character?"

"Yes, what is it? Rebellious or docile, open or deceitful, violent or peaceable, gay or sullen? Buyers always ask the character of the slave that they purchase, and though we are not obliged to answer, it is bad policy to deceive them. Come, friend Bull, what is your character? Be sincere, for your own interest. The master that buys you will be sure to learn the truth in the end, and he will make you pay more dearly than me for a falsehood."

"Then write on your tablets: The laboring bull loves servitude, delights in slavery, and licks the hand that strikes him."

"You jest; the Gallic race love slavery! As well say that the eagle or the falcon loves the cage!"

"Then write on your tablets that, his strength returned, the bull, on the first opportunity, will break his yoke, rip up his master, and flee to the woods to live there in freedom."

"There is more truth in this; for those brutes of keepers told me that at the first blow of the whip you bounded forward furiously till stopped by your chain. But, do you see, friend Bull, if I offer you to purchasers under the dangerous character which you give yourself, you will find few bidders. Now, as an honest trader should not extol his wares beyond measure, neither should he too much depreciate them. I will, therefore, give your character as follows." And he wrote: "Character violent and suspicious, in consequence of being unused to slavery, which is, as yet, quite new to him; but he can easily be tamed by using gentleness and severity in turn."

"Read it, that I may know under what character I am to be sold."

"You are right; we must be sure that it will sound well from the mouth of the auctioneer: Number 1. Bull, a Breton Gaul, of prodigious strength and stature, aged twenty-nine; an excellent husbandman; of a violent and suspicious character, in consequence of being unused to slavery, which is as yet quite new to him; but he can easily be tamed by using gentleness and severity in turn."

"So this is all that remains of a proud and free man, whose only crime is that of having defended his country against Cæsar," said I aloud, with bitterness. "Ah! why did I not kill this Cæsar, who, after reducing us to slavery, divides our lands among his soldiers, when I carried him off armed on my horse!"

"You, brave Bull, you made a prisoner of the great Cæsar!" said the dealer, mockingly. "It is a pity that I could not have this cried at the auction; it would make you a curiosity worth owning."

I reproached myself for having uttered words seeming like regret and complaint in the presence of this dealer in human flesh. Returning to my first idea, which made me patiently endure the loquacity of this man, I said, "When you picked me up on the field of battle, where I had fallen, did you see near by a chariot drawn by four black horses, with a woman and two children hanging from a pole?"

"Did I see it! did I see it!" cried the slave-dealer, sighing. "Oh! what excellent merchandise was lost there! We counted in this chariot eleven women and young girls; all beautiful—oh! so beautiful! worth at least forty or fifty aurei each, but dead, quite dead, and of advantage to no one."

"And were no women or children left alive in this chariot?"

"Women? No, alas! not one, to the great disappointment of the Roman soldiers and myself; but I believe that there were two or three children who had survived the death which these savage Gallic women, as fierce as lionesses, had attempted to inflict on them."

"And where are they?" I cried, thinking of my son and daughter, who, perhaps, were among the survivors. "Where are they? Answer."

"I have told you, my brave Bull, that I buy none but the wounded. One of my acquaintances bought the lot of children, with some others, for a few more were found alive in the other chariots. But of what interest is it to you whether there are children to be sold?"

"Because I had a son and daughter in this chariot?" I cried, feeling my heart ready to break.

"How old were they?"

"The girl was eight and the boy nine."

"And where is your wife?"

"If none of the eleven women in the chariot was alive, my wife is dead."

"It is a pity, a great pity; your wife was fruitful, since you already had two children; you four would have brought a good price. Oh! what a loss!"

I repressed an impulse of useless indignation against this infamous old man, and

answered, "Yes, you would have offered for sale the bull, his wife, and their young ones?"

"Certainly; since Cæsar is about to distribute your depopulated lands among his numerons veterans, those who have reserved no prisoners for themselves, will be obliged to buy slaves to cultivate and re-people their estates, and you are of a vigorous and rustic breed, for which reason I hope to sell you to good advantage."

"Listen; I would rather know that my son and daughter were dead, like their mother, than that they were spared to live in slavery. Nevertheless, since some children are found alive in our chariots—which surprises me, for the Gallic woman always strikes with a firm and sure hand when it is necessary to save her race from shame—it may be that my son and daughter are among the children to be sold. How can I know this?"

"What is the use of knowing it?"

"In order that I may, at least, have my children with me."

The slave-dealer burst into a laugh, shrugged his shoulders, and replied, "Did you not hear me? And, by Jupiter! don't take it into your head to play deaf, for it is one of the defects against which I must guarantee you. I told you that I did not buy or sell children."

"How does that affect me?"

"In this way. Out of a hundred who buy slaves for farm labor, not ten will be found silly enough to buy a man alone with his two children without a mother. To offer you for sale with your two little ones, if they were living, would be to run the risk of losing half your value, by burdening your purchaser with two useless mouths to feed. Do you understand me now, thick-headed fellow? No, for you are still glaring at me with a stupid and ferocious air. I tell you that, had I been obliged to buy your two children in the same lot with you, or had they been thrown into the bargain, like old Skin-and-bone, my first care would have been to sell them without you. Do you understand at last?"

I did at last understand him, for till that moment I had not dreamed of such refinement of torture in slavery. The thought that my two children, if living, might be sold far from me, I knew not to whom or where, had not entered my mind as possible, so frightful did it seem. My heart swelled with grief, and I said almost supplicatingly to the dealer, such was my suffering, "You are deceiving me! What will be done with my children? Who would wish to buy these poor little creatures, useless mouths to feed, as you said yourself, just now?"

"Oh! those who deal in children find sure and ready customers, especially if the children are pretty—are yours?"

"Oh! yes," I answered in spite of myself, calling to mind more vividly than ever, alas! the lovely, fair faces of little Sylvest and Siomara, as much alike as twins, that I had kissed for the last time a moment before the battle of Vannes. "Oh! yes, they are beautiful, like their mother."

"If they are beautiful, my brave Bull, have no anxiety, they will easily find bidders; the dealers in children have good customers in the decrepid and palled Roman senators; and, now I think of it, the rich and noble lord, Trymalcion, a capricious old amateur, is hourly expected. He has been traveling in the Roman colonies in the south of Gaul, and is to come here, they say, with his galley, which is fitted up like a palace. He will doubtless wish to carry back to Italy some pretty specimens of Gallic brats, and if your children are handsome, their fate is certain, for Lord Trymalcion is one of my friend's best customers."*

I had at first listened to the slave-dealer without comprehending his meaning; but my brain soon reeled with horror at the thought that my children, if they had unhappily escaped the death which their provident mother had designed for them, would be carried to Italy, to be subjected to an infamous fate. It was not anger and rage that I felt—no, but a grief so great and a fear so terrible that I fell on my knees upon the straw, and, stretching my supplicating hands, despite the shackles, toward the slave-dealer, wept, unable to utter a word.

The dealer looked at me with great surprise, and exclaimed, "What is the matter, my brave Bull, what is the matter?"

"My children," I ejaculated, in a voice choked with sobs, "my children, if they are living!"

"Your children?"

"Yes, my children; what a fate awaits them if they are sold to these men!"

"What! does such a fate alarm you?"

"Hesus! Hesus!" I cried in tears, "it is horrible!"

"Are you mad?" returned the slave-dealer. "What is there so horrible in the fate that awaits your children? Oh! you Gauls are true barbarians; but know that there is no easier and more flowery life than that of the little flute-players and dancers, with which those rich old men amuse themselves. Ah! if you could see the little rogues, with their cheeks covered with enamel, their brows crowned with roses, their floating robes, spangled with gold, and their costly ear-rings; and the little girls, with their tunics—"

* We dare not dwell on these monstrosities; we will only quote the words of the legist, Heterius: "Immodesty is a crime in the freeman, a duty in the freedman, and a necessity in the slave." Wallon, in his *History of Slavery*, gives fuller details concerning the abominable and precocious depravity enforced on children and slaves.

I could listen no longer; a cloud of blood swam before my eyes, and I sprang, furious and desperate, toward the wretch; but my chain again suddenly arrested me, and I reeled and fell on the straw. I looked round me; there was not a stick, not a stone—nothing! Seized with madness, I fell back, and commenced biting my chain like a wild beast.

"What a brute of a Gaul!" cried the slave-dealer, shrugging his shoulders, and keeping well out of my reach. "Here he roars, and rages, and gnaws his chain like a wolf, because he is told that his children, if they are beautiful, will live in opulence, ease, and pleasure. Do you know—dolt that you are—what would become of them if they were ugly or deformed? Do you know to whom they would be sold? I will tell you: to rich noblemen, curious to read the future in the palpitating entrails of children freshly slain for the experiments of diviners."*

"O Hesus!" I exclaimed, filled with hope at the thought; let it be thus with mine, in spite of their beauty. Oh! give them death, that they may live elsewhere in their innocence with their chaste mother!" And I burst into tears.

"Friend Bull," said the slave-dealer, with an air of vexation, "I was not mistaken in writing you down on my tablets as violent and passionate, but I fear that you have a worse fault than these—I mean a tendency to sadness. I have seen melancholy slaves pine away like the winter's snow before the sun of spring, become as shriveled as parchment, and cause their owner great loss by their sickly appearance. Now, beware! Scarce a fortnight remains before the auction where you are to be sold. It is very little in which to regain your flesh, and to recover a fresh and ruddy complexion, a smooth skin, and, in short, all the signs of health and vigor sought by amateurs anxious to possess a sound and robust slave. To obtain this, I shall spare nothing—neither nourishing food, nor care, nor any of the little artifices known to us, whereby to set off our merchandise. But you must second me, on your part. Now, if, instead of this, you continue to rave, or, what is worse, if you weep and grieve, that is, pine away and grow thin by thinking of your children, instead of doing me honor and bringing me profit by your good looks, take care, friend Bull, take care!† I am not a novice in my trade; I have carried it on in all countries; I have tamed men more intractable than you; I have rendered Sardinians docile and Sarmatians as gentle as lambs; you can, therefore, judge of my skill. Take my advice, then, and do not try to injure me by losing your flesh. I am gentle and merciful; I am averse to inflicting punishment, which often leaves marks that depreciate the value of slaves. Nevertheless, if you force me to it, you will become acquainted with the mysteries of the ergastulum,* designed for the refractory. Think of this, friend Bull. It is almost meal-time; the physician says that you can now have substantial food; and chicken-broth, oatmeal, with roast-mutton gravy, good bread, and wine mixed with water, will be brought you. I shall know whether you have eaten with a good appetite, and in a way calculated to gain your strength, instead of losing it by shedding tears. Eat, therefore; it is the only means of gaining my good graces; eat heartily—eat all the time; I will provide; you can never eat enough to please me, for your skin is far from being filled out, and it must be—understand me—within a fortnight, the time of the auction. I leave you with this advice, praying the gods that you may profit by it; if not—if not, I pity you, friend Bull!"

With these words, the slave-dealer left me alone, chained in the cell, the heavy door of which closed upon me.

* Wallon, in his *History of Slavery in Antiquity*, says that "masters ripped up slave children to seek prognostics in their entrails."

† "The slave-dealers," says Wallon, in his *History of Slavery in Antiquity*, "were wont to say: 'As timid as a Phrygian, as vain as a Moor, as lying as a Cretan, as indocile as a Sardinian, as ferocious as a Dalmatian, as gentle as an Ionian, &c."

CHAPTER VI.

The punishment.—The Ancients of the tribe of Vannes.—The Moorish executioner.—The execution.—Last song of the bard and the Druids.—Eve of the auction.—Toilette of Guilhern.—Magic philter.—Guilhern believes himself the victim of the slave-dealer's sorceries.—The slave-market.—The cage.—Guilhern tested and sold.—The captive women and the shameful insults inflicted on them.—The noble lord Trymalcion.—The children sold at auction.—Sylvest and Siomara, the son and daughter of Guilhern.—The charm of which Guilhern believes himself the victim is broken by nameless horrors.—He suddenly calls to mind the old war-dog, Deber Trud, the man-eater.

HAD it not been for my uncertainty respecting the fate of my children, I should have killed myself after the slave-dealer's departure, either by dashing out my brains against the wall of my prison, or by refusing all nourishment. Many of the Gauls had, in this manner, escaped slavery; but it was my duty not to die before knowing whether my children were living; and in this case, also, it was my duty not to die before making every effort in my power to snatch them from the destiny with which they were threatened. I first examined my cell, in order to see whether, having once regained my strength, I had any chance of

* A kind of subterranean cell, in which slaves were confined.

escape. It was formed of a wall on three sides, and on the other of a thick partition, strengthened by joists, between two of which was the door, carefully bolted on the outside; a bar of iron was placed across the window, which was too narrow to admit of the passage of my body. I examined my chain and its rings, one of which was riveted on my leg, while the other was fastened to one of the cross-bars of my couch, and found that it would have been impossible to break it, had I been in possession of my full vigor. I, Guilhern, the son of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, was forced to think of stratagem, and to devise means of gaining the good-will of the slave-dealer, in order to obtain from him some information of my little Sylvest and Siomara. For this, it was necessary not to pine away, or to appear sad and terrified about the fate of my children. I feared that I should be unable to succeed in feigning; our Gallic race has never known cunning and falsehood; it triumphs or it dies.

On the same evening of the day that I regained my senses and became conscious of my slavery, I witnessed a spectacle of terrible grandeur, which revived my courage; I no longer despaired of the safety and freedom of Gaul. At nightfall, I heard the tramp of several troops of cavalry in the public square of Vannes, which I could see from the narrow window of my prison. I looked out, and the following spectacle met my eyes:

Two cohorts of Roman infantry and a legion of cavalry, drawn up in battle array, surrounded a large empty space, in the midst of which was erected a wooden scaffold. On this scaffold was placed a huge block of wood, by the side of which a Moor of gigantic stature and bronzed complexion, dressed in a jacket and trowsers of tanned skins, stained with dark red spots, with his hair confined by a scarlet band, and his legs and arms bare, stood with an axe in his hand.

I heard in the distance the Roman clarions playing a mournful march. The sound drew nearer; one of the cohorts ranged on the square opened its ranks, and the musicians entered the empty space, followed by the legionaries, clad in iron armor. After this troop came the prisoners of our army, bound in couples, then (and my heart began to beat with anguish) the women and children, also bound. More than twice a stone's throw separated me from these captives, and at so great a distance it was impossible for me to distinguish their features, in spite of my efforts. Yet my son and daughter, perchance, were there.

The prisoners, of all ages and sexes, shut in between two files of soldiers, were ranged at the foot of the scaffold. More troops then entered the square, followed by twenty-two other captives, walking in single file, but not chained; these I knew, by their proud and firm bearing, to be the chiefs and elders of the town and tribe of Vannes, all old, white-haired men. Among them, and walking last, I saw two Druids and a bard from the college of Karnak, the first distinguishable by their long white robes, the second by his tunic striped with purple. Next appeared the Roman infantry, and lastly, between two escorts of Numidian horsemen, wrapped in their long white mantles, Cæsar on horseback, surrounded by his officers. I recognized the scourge of Gaul by the same armor which he wore when, with the aid of my beloved brother Mikael, the armorer, I carried him off on my horse. Oh! at his sight, how I cursed anew my stupid astonishment, which had been the salvation of the destroyer of my country!

Cæsar paused some distance from the scaffold, and made a sign with his right hand. The twenty-two prisoners, the bard and two Druids going last, immediately mounted the scaffold with a tranquil step; in turn they laid their white heads on the block, and each of these venerated heads, struck off by the axe of the Moor, rolled to the feet of the Gallic captives.*

The bard and the Druids alone were left. They clasped each other in a close embrace, with their eyes raised to heaven, then uttered in a loud voice the words of my sister Hena, the virgin of the Isle of Sena, at the hour of her voluntary sacrifice on the stones of Karnak—those words which had been the signal for the uprising of Brittany against the Romans:

"Hesus! Hesus! by this blood which is about to flow, mercy for Gaul! Gauls! by this blood which is about to flow, victory to our arms!"

The bard added, "The Chief of the Hundred Valleys is safe; there is still hope for us." All the Gallic captives—men, women, and children—who witnessed the punishment, repeated together the last words of the Druids with so triumphant a shout, that the sound reached my ears. This last song ended, the bard and the two Druids in turn laid on the block their sacred heads, which rolled like the others to the foot of the scaffold.

At that moment, all the captives shouted the chorus of the bards, "Strike the Roman! fell him to the earth! strike harder yet!" in so loud and threatening a tone, that the legionaries, lowering their lances, hastily closed in around the captives, unarmed and bound as they were, in

* "Cæsar thought it incumbent on him to make a harsh example; he put all the senate to death, and sold the rest of the prisoners at auction."—*Cæsar, De Bello Gallico*, l. iii, c. xvi.

a circle bristling with pikes. The voices of our brethren, nevertheless, had reached the wounded who were imprisoned like me in the stable, and all, myself included, replied to the shout, "Strike the Roman! fell him to the earth! strike harder yet!"

Such was the end of the war of Brittany and of that summons to arms by the Druids from the top of the sacred stones of Karnak forest, after the voluntary sacrifice of my sister Hena—of that summons to arms which ended in the battle of Vannes. Gaul, however, though invaded on all sides, was yet to resist. The Chief of the Hundred Valleys, forced to abandon Brittany, had gone to arouse other tribes that still were free.

Hesus! Hesus! it is not only the misfortunes of my beloved country that rend my heart, but also those of my family. Alas! at every wound of the country the family bleeds!

Resigned through compulsion to my fate, I gradually recovered my strength, daily hoping to obtain some information of my children from the slave-dealer. I pictured them to him as faithfully as possible; and he always answered me that among the little captives that he had seen, none bore any resemblance to the description which I had given him, but that many of the slave-dealers were in the habit of concealing their choicest captives from all eyes till the day of the public sale. He also informed me that the noble Lord Trymalcion, the child-buyer, whose very name gave me a chill of horror, had arrived at Vannes in his galley.

After a fortnight's captivity, the time of the sale at length came. The evening before, the slave-dealer entered my prison, bringing my supper with his own hand, together with a flask of old wine. The supper finished, which he insisted that I should eat in his presence, he said with his usual jocularity, "Friend Bull, I am well pleased with you; your skin is almost filled out; you no longer fly into fits of rage, and if you are not over-merry, at least you are not sad and tearful. We will drink this bottle of wine together, hoping that you will find a good master, and that I shall reap a handsome profit."

"No," I answered, "I will not drink."

"Why not?"

"Servitude makes wine bitter, and above all the wine of the country where we were born."

The slave-dealer looked at me with an air of vexation. "You make an ill return for my kindness," said he; "if you will not drink, you can let it alone. I was going to empty the first cup to your new master, and the next to your speedy reunion with your children; I had my reasons for it."

"What do you say," I cried, full of hope and anguish. "Do you know anything about them?"

"No," he replied abruptly, rising as if to go out. "You refuse my friendly advances—it is nothing to me! you have supped well, now sleep well."

"But what do you know of my children? Speak! I entreat you, speak!"

"Wine alone can unloose my tongue, friend Bull, and I am not one of those men who like to drink alone. You are too grand to empty a cup with your master. Sleep well till to-morrow, the day of the auction." And he took another step toward the door. I was afraid of irritating the man by refusing to yield to his fancy, and, above all, of losing the opportunity to gain some intelligence of my little Sylvest and Siomara.

"Do you insist on it?" said I. "Well, I will drink, then, to the hope of soon seeing my son and daughter."

"You need a great deal of urging," returned the slave-dealer, approaching within arm's length, and pouring out a full cup of wine for me, after which he filled another for himself. I afterward remembered that he held it a long time to his lips, without my being able to assure myself that the contents were swallowed. "Come," said he, "let us drink to the profit I shall make on you."

"Yes, let us drink to the hope that I may meet my children."

I emptied my cup in turn; the wine appeared to be excellent.

"I have promised," resumed the slave-dealer, "and I will keep my word. Did you say that the chariot containing your family on the day of the battle of Vannes was drawn by four black oxen, each with a white spot in his forehead?"

"Yes, they were all four brothers and exactly alike," answered I, unable to stifle a sigh at the thought of this beautiful team, which had been raised in our meadows, and which my father and mother always admired so much.

"Had these oxen leather collars on their necks, furnished with brass bells, like this?" he continued, searching his pocket, and taking from it a brass bell, which I recognized as one that had been made by my brother Mikael, the armorer, and which bore his stamp, like everything manufactured by him.

"This bell belonged on our oxen," said I. "Will you give it to me? It is of no value."

"What!" he answered, "do you also want to have bells on your neck, friend Bull? You have a right to do so. Here, take it; I only brought it in order to learn from you whether the team from which it came belonged to the chariot of your family."

"Yes," I replied, putting the brass bell into the pocket of my braga, as perhaps the only remembrance that would be left me of the past, "yes, this team was ours; but it seems to me that I saw one or two of the oxen fall in the fight."

"You were not mistaken—two of the oxen were killed in the battle; the other two, though slightly wounded, are alive, and have been bought, as I only learned to-day, by a slave-dealer of my acquaintance, who also bought three children that were found in the chariot, two of whom, a little boy and a little girl about eight or nine years old, were half strangled by a cord which was still around their neck, but were finally brought to life."

"And where is this slave-dealer?" I cried, trembling.

"He is at Vannes. You will see him to-morrow; we have drawn our places in the auction by lot, and his is next to mine. If the children that he has to sell are yours, you will be near them."

"Very near?"

"About twice the length of the prison. But what is the matter with you that you put your hands to your head?"

"I do not know. It is a long time since I drank any wine, and that which you gave me has gone to my head; for the last few minutes I have felt giddy."

"That proves that my wine is generous, friend Bull," returned the slave-dealer, with a peculiar smile; then rising, he went out, called one of the keepers, and returned with a box under his arm. He then carefully shut the door, and hung a piece of cloth before the window, in order that no one could look from without into the cell, which was lighted by a lamp. This done, he looked at me attentively anew, without uttering a word, as he opened his box, from which he took several vials and sponges, a little silver vase with a long curved tube, and various instruments, one of which seemed to have a sharp steel blade. As I watched his movements, I felt an indescribable stupor creeping over me, and my heavy eyelids closed once or twice in spite of myself. I had hitherto been seated on my straw couch, to which I was chained, but my head became so heavy that I was obliged to lean it against the wall.

"Friend Bull, whatever may happen to you, you must not be troubled," said the slave-dealer, laughing.

"Why, what will happen to me?" I replied, vainly trying to shake off my torpor.

"You feel a kind of drowsiness stealing over you in spite of yourself?"

"It is true."

"You hear and see me; but as if your eyes and ears were covered by a vail?"

"It is true," I murmured, for my voice also grew faint, and though I felt no pain, my life seemed ebbing away. I made a last effort, and said, "Why am I thus affected?"

"Because I am going to make your toilette as a slave."

"What do you mean?"

"Friend Bull, I have in my possession certain magic philters, whereby to set off my merchandise. Although you are now in tolerably good condition, the privation of exercise and fresh air, the fever caused by your wounds, the sadness always occasioned by captivity, and other causes, have parched and tarnished your skin, and made your complexion sallow; but, thanks to my philters, to-morrow morning your skin will be as soft and moist and your complexion as ruddy as though you were just from the fields on a fine spring morning, my brave rustic; this appearance will only last a day or two; but I expect, by Jupiter! that to-morrow night you will be sold, and after that you are at liberty to grow sallow and thin at your new master's. I shall begin by stripping you naked and anointing your body with this prepared oil," said the slave-dealer, uncorking one of the vials.*

These preparations seemed so insulting to my dignity as a man that, in spite of the stupor that overpowered me more and more, I started up, and cried, tossing my hands about, "I am not handcuffed to-day. If you come near me, I will strangle you."

"That is what I foresaw, friend Bull," replied the slave-dealer, calmly pouring the oil from the vial into a vase and moistening a sponge therein. "You would resist and rage. I might have had you bound by the keepers, but you would have bruised your limbs in the struggle—a bad sign in the eyes of customers, for bruises always denote an unruly slave. And what shrieks you would have raised, and how you would have rebelled when we came to shave your head in token of slavery!"

At this last insulting threat (is not the loss of his hair the greatest outrage that can be inflicted on a Gaul?)† I gathered up my remaining strength, and cried:

"By Ritha Gawr, that Gallic saint who made himself a sagum of the kings' beards that he had shaven, I will kill you if you dare to touch a single hair of my head."

"Oh! have no uneasiness, friend Bull," said the slave-dealer, showing me a sharp instrument, "I shall not cut off a single one of your hairs, but all of them!"

I could no longer keep my feet; reeling like a drunken man, I fell on the straw, while the slave-dealer burst into laughter,

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* Wallon, in his *History of Slavery in Antiquity*, describes the singular means used by slave-dealers to rejuvenate their slaves.

† The Gauls attached so much importance to the length of their hair, that all the Northern and Western provinces were called Long-haired Gaul. See La Tour d'Auvergne's *Gallic Origin*.

and, brandishing his steel instrument before my eyes, said:

"Thanks to this, your head will soon be as bald as that of the great Cæsar, whom, you say, you carried off armed on your horse, friend Bull. The magic philter which you drank in the Gallic wine will soon place you as completely at my mercy as a corpse."

He spoke truly; these words are the last that I remember. A leaden sleep fell upon me, and I became wholly unconscious of everything.

This was but the prelude to a horrible day, rendered doubly horrible to this hour by the mystery in which it was enveloped; yes, at the hour that I write this for thee, my son Sylvest, in order that this sincere and detailed narrative, in which I narrate to thee, one by one, the sufferings and insults inflicted on our country and race, may inspire thee with relentless hatred toward the Romans, while awaiting the day of vengeance and deliverance—at this hour, the mysteries of that horrible day of sale are impenetrable to me, unless they may be explained by the sorceries of the slave-dealer, many of these men being addicted, it is said, to magic, though our venerated Druids affirm that there is no such thing as magic in existence.

On the day of the auction, I was aroused early by my master from a deep sleep. Remembering what had passed the night before, my first thought was to raise my hands to my head, when I found, to my horror, that it had been shaved, as well as my beard. This deeply grieved me; but instead of flying into a rage, as I had done the evening before, I only shed a few tears, as I looked with terror at the slave-holder. Yes, I wept before this man and looked at him with terror!

What change had been wrought in me during the night? Was I still under the influence of the philter mixed with the wine? No; my torpor had disappeared; I found myself active in body and sound in understanding; but as to spirit and courage, I was enfeebled, enervated, timorous and—why not say it?—cowardly; yes, cowardly! I, Guilhern, the son of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, looked timidly about me; my heart seemed ready to burst, and the tears filled my eyes, where before my brow had flushed with anger and shame. I had a vague consciousness of this transformation, due perhaps to sorcery, and was astonished at it; now, when I call it to mind, I am still astonished at it, but not one of the details of that horrible day is effaced from my memory.

The slave-dealer silently watched me, with a triumphant air; he had left me nothing but my braga. I remained seated on my couch, stripped to the waist. He said, "Get up!"

I hastened to obey. He took from his pocket a little steel mirror, which he handed me, saying, "Look at yourself."

I gazed at my own face with wonder. Thanks to the sorcery of this man, my cheeks were as ruddy and my skin as smooth and fresh as if no frightful calamities had fallen on me and mine. Nevertheless, on seeing for the first time my head and face closely shaved in token of servitude, I again shed tears, which I strove to conceal from the slave-dealer for fear of displeasing him. He put the mirror into his pocket, and, taking from the table a wreath of beech-leaves,* said, "Stoop down!"

I obeyed; my master placed the wreath on my head. He then took a piece of parchment on which several lines were written in large Roman characters, which he tied round my neck in such a manner that it fell on my breast,† threw a long woolen blanket over my shoulders, opened the secret spring which attached my chain to the end of my couch, and fastened this chain to an iron ring that had been riveted on my other ankle during my sleep, so that, though both legs were chained, I could take short steps. My hands, moreover, were tied behind my back.

According to the orders of the slave-dealer, whom I followed with the docility and submissiveness of a dog toward his master, I laboriously descended the steps which led from my cell to the stable, where I saw lying on the straw several of the captives, among whom I had passed the first night of my captivity, and whose recovery was probably not advanced enough to permit of their sale. Other slaves, whose heads had been shaved, like mine, by stratagem or by force, and also with wreaths of leaves on their heads, labels on their breasts, handcuffs on their wrists, and heavy fetters on their feet, were just beginning, under the supervision of the keepers, to defile through a door which opened on the public square of Vannes, where the auction was to be held.

Almost all the captives appeared gloomy, dejected, and submissive, like myself, and walked with their eyes cast down, as if ashamed to look at each other. Among the last, I recognized two or three of our tribe, one of whom said in a low voice as he passed me, "Guilhern, we are shaved; but hair will grow again, and nails likewise." I understood that the Gaul wished to give me to understand that the day of vengeance would come; but, through the inconceivable cowardice that had taken

* "The prisoners of war who were sold as slaves," says Wallon, "wore a wreath of the leaves of some tree as a distinctive sign."

† "A writing suspended on the breast of each slave," says Wallon, "told his age, good qualities, calling, etc."

possession of me since the morning, I pretended to be ignorant of his meaning, so much did I fear the slave-dealer.*

The spot occupied by our master for the auction of his slaves was not far from the stable where we were detained as prisoners. We soon reached a kind of stall, surrounded on three sides with planks, covered with canvas and strewed with straw. On my way I saw other similar stalls arranged on the right and the left of a long space, forming a kind of street. A multitude of Roman officers and soldiers, buyers and sellers of slaves, and other persons who follow in the wake of armies, were walking up and down, staring at the prisoners chained in the stalls with insulting curiosity. My master had told me that his place in the market was opposite that of the dealer who had my children in his power. I cast my eyes toward the stall, but could see nothing. A thick linen curtain was drawn before the opening, whence I heard, in a few moments, imprecations mixed with the piercing shrieks and groans of women, and the exclamation in Gallic, "Death, death, but not insult!"

"Those timid fools are playing the vestal, because they must be stripped in order to show them to bidders," said the slave-dealer to me. He soon took me to the back of the stall. On my way through it, I counted nine captives—some young lads, and others of my own age; two only were past maturity. Some were sitting on the straw with their heads bowed down, in order to escape the gaze of the curious; others were stretched face downward on the ground, and a few stood erect, casting savage glances on the keepers who watched over them with the lash in their hand and the sword by their side. The slave-dealer pointed to a great wooden cage or sort of huge box at the back of the tent, and said, "Friend Bull, you are the pearl, the gem of my lot; enter this cage; the comparison between you and the other slaves might depreciate them too much; so, like a shrewd dealer, I shall first try to sell what is of least value—the small fry before the large fish."

I obeyed and entered the cage.† My master closed the door. I had room to stand erect, and an opening in the top permitted me to breathe without being seen from without. A bell soon rang; it was the signal for the sale to begin. The shrill voices of the auctioneers rose on all sides, extolling the wares of the dealers in human flesh, and urging purchasers to enter the stalls. Several customers came to look at the lot of my master; without understanding his words, I divined from the tones of his voice that he was striving to tempt them while the auctioneer announced the bids. From time to time a great tumult rose in the stall, mingled with the imprecations of the slave-dealer and the sound of the keepers' whips, doubtless lashing some of my companions in captivity who refused to follow the new masters to whom they were adjudged by the auctioneer; but these clamors soon ceased under the gag. At other times, I heard the noise of a desperate, although almost mute, struggle, which was also soon ended by the keepers. I was terrified by the resistance shown by these captives; I no longer comprehended the possibility of either resistance or boldness, and was plunged in my cowardly inertia, when the door of my cage opened, and the slave-dealer joyfully cried, "All are sold except you, my pearl, my gem! And, by Mercury! to whom I promise an offering, in reward for my profit to-day, I think that I have found for you a purchaser to my mind!"

My master ordered me to quit the cage. I crossed the stall, in which no more slaves were to be seen, and found myself face to face with a gray-haired man, with a cold, hard face, in a military dress. He was very lame, and leaned upon a cane in the form of a vine-stock, the distinguishing mark of the centurions in the Roman army. The slave-dealer, having taken from my shoulders the woolen blanket in which I had been wrapped, I remained naked to the waist; I was then obliged to take off my braga, while my master, proud of his merchandise, thus displayed my nudity before the sight of the purchaser. Several curious spectators assembled to gaze at me. I cast down my eyes, overwhelmed with shame and grief, but not with anger.

After reading the label that was suspended from my neck, the buyer examined me at length, responding now and then by approving nods to the remarks which the slave-dealer made in the Roman tongue with his usual volubility, and often interrupting him to measure with his fingers the breadth of my chest and the size of my limbs and waist. This first examination appeared to satisfy the centurion, for my master said, "Be proud, friend Bull, your frame is found perfect. See," he added, to the purchaser, "would not the Greek sculptors make this superb slave the model for a statue of Hercules? My customer agrees with me; you must now show him that your strength and agility are worthy of your appearance." With these words, he pointed to a leaden weight placed close by

* "The magic philters of ancient Medea and Circe were nothing but pharmaceutical potions, as varied as powerful in their actions. Many of these narcotics and stimulants, which sometimes threw men into a state of incredible mental prostration, and at others into frenzy, were long in use among the Romans. The slave merchants employed them to enervate the most intractable of their captives."—*Philosophical Dictionary.*

† "Slaves of high price," says Wallon, "were kept in a sort of cage, in order that the mystery might attract the lovers of the curious."

for the trial, and said, untying my arms, "Put on your braga, then take this weight in both hands, raise it above your head, and hold it there as long as you can."

I was about to execute this order, with my stolid docility, when the centurion stooped down, and endeavored to lift the leaden weight, which he did with great difficulty, while the slave-dealer said:

"This cunning old cripple is as sharp a fox as myself; he knows that many dealers have hollow weights, seeming three or four times heavier than they really are, wherewith to test the strength of their slaves. Come, friend Bull, show this suspicious Roman that you are as vigorous as solidly built."

I had not fully regained my strength; nevertheless, I took the heavy weight in both hands, and balanced it for a moment above my head.* A vague idea passed through my mind of letting it fall on my master's skull, and crushing him before me; but this instinct of my past courage soon vanished before my present timidity, and I replaced the weight on the ground.

The lame Roman appeared satisfied.

"Better and better, friend Bull," said the slave-dealer. "By Hercules! your patron, never did slave do his owner more credit. Your force is proved; now show your agility. Two keepers will hold this bar a cubit from the ground; leap over it backward and forward with your feet chained; nothing better proves the vigor and elasticity of the limbs."

In spite of my recent wounds and the weight of my chain, I leaped several times back and forth over the bar, to the great content of the centurion.

"Better and better," resumed the centurion; "it is proved that you are as powerfully built and agile as you are vigorous; the inoffensive gentleness of your character remains to be seen. As to this last trial, I am certain in advance of success." With these words, he again bound my hands behind my back.

I did not at first understand the meaning of the slave-dealer. He took a whip from the hand of the keeper, and pointing it at me, spoke in a whisper to the purchaser, who made a sign of assent, and was advancing toward me, when the Roman took the whip from his hand.

"The suspicious old fox is afraid that I shall not strike hard enough, friend Bull. Come, do not flinch; for the last time, do me credit, and insure my profit by showing that you bear chastisement patiently."

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when the cripple rained a shower of blows on my breast and shoulders. I felt the pain but not the shame of the outrage, and, bursting into tears, fell on my knees, begging for pardon, while the curious spectators, gathered round the entrance of the stall, laughed at my humiliation. The centurion, astonished at such resignation in a Gaul, lowered his whip and looked at the slave-dealer, who seemed to say, by a gesture, "Have I deceived you?" Then, stroking my lacerated back with his hand, as he would have caressed an animal with whom he was pleased, my master resumed:

"If you are a bull in strength, you are a lamb in gentleness; I expected this patience from you. Now, a few questions on your calling, and the bargain will be concluded. The purchaser asks where you tilled the soil."

"In the tribe of Karnak," I replied, with a cowardly sigh; "where I and my family cultivated the lands of our fathers."

"The slave-dealer translated my reply to the cripple, who appeared at once surprised and pleased; he exchanged a few words with my master, who resumed:

"The purchaser asks where the house and lands of your family were situated?"

"Not far from the stones of Karnak, to the eastward, on the coast of Craigh."

The Roman appeared too well satisfied with this reply to believe it, for the slave-dealer resumed:

"This cripple is suspicious above everything. To be certain that I do not deceive him, and that I translate your words faithfully, he asks you to draw on the sand the position of the house and lands of your family with respect to the stones of Karnak and the sea. Unluckily, I do not know what interest he has in knowing this, or I would make him pay dearly for it. But obey his orders."

My hands were again unbound; I took the whip of one of the keepers, and drew on the sand with the handle, under the attentive gaze of the centurion, the position of the Karnak stones and the coast of Craigh; and afterward the sight of our house and fields to the east of Karnak. The cripple clapped his hands in token of joy, and drawing a long purse from his pocket, took from it a number of gold pieces, which he offered to the slave-dealer. After a lengthy discussion on the price of my body, the seller and the buyer at length agreed on a sum.

"By Mercury!" said the slave-dealer to me, "I have sold you for thirty-eight aurei, half down, and the other half at the end of the sale, when the Roman takes you away. Was I wrong in calling you the gem of my lot!" He added, after exchanging a few words with the centurion, "Your new master does not think that you are chained securely enough, and, after paying such a price for a slave, I can well understand his anxiety. He wishes to fetter you besides; he will take you away in a wagon."

* "The slave," says Wallon, "was obliged to lift weights, run and leap, to prove his vigor and agility."

In addition to my chain, two heavy iron fetters were fastened to my feet, which would have prevented any other movement than leaping, with my feet joined together, had I been able to leap with so heavy a load; my handcuffs were carefully inspected, and I was placed in a corner of the stall, while the slave-dealer counted his gold again and again. At that moment, the curtain which concealed the entrance to the opposite stall was raised, and the following spectacle met my eyes:

On one side, three beautiful young women —the same doubtless whose shrieks and groans I had heard when the keepers had stripped them of their clothing in order to expose them to the gaze of purchasers— were seated, half naked, with their bare feet, coated with chalk, passed through the rings of a long iron bar.* They clung together, with their arms interlaced in such a manner that two among them, still overpowered with shame, hid their faces in the bosom of the third. The latter, pale and gloomy, with her long black hair flowing loosely over her shoulders, bowed her head on her uncovered and lacerated breast—lacerated doubtless during the struggle of these unfortunates with the keepers. At a little distance from them, two children, three or four years old, fastened only by a slender cord passed around their waist and tied to a stake, were laughing and playing on the straw with the thoughtlessness of their age. I thought, and I feel certain that I was not mistaken, that these children belonged to none of the three women.

In another corner of the stall, I saw a matron of a stature equal to that of my mother Margarid, with her wrists handcuffed and her feet shackled; she stood erect, leaning against a post to which she was chained by the waist, as motionless as a statue, with her gray hair dishevelled, her eyes fixed, and her face livid and distorted, bursting from time to time into a fit of threatening and maniacal laughter. Lastly, at the back of the stall, I perceived a cage similar to that in which I had been confined; this cage, according to the information given me by the slave-dealer, must hold my two children. My eyes filled with tears. Nevertheless, in spite of the weakness which still chilled and enervated me, at the thought that my children were there, close by me, I felt a slight warmth mount from my heart to my brain, the first symptom of the awakening of my energy.

Now, my son Sylvest, thou for whom I write this, read slowly the following narrative. Yes, read it slowly, in order that each word of the tale may forever inspire thy soul with an implacable hatred toward the Romans, a hatred which will break forth with fury on the day of vengeance. Read this, my son, and thou wilt understand why thy mother, after giving life to thy sister and thyself, and lavishing on you the tenderest cares, could not better prove her maternal love for you both than by attempting to kill you, in order to take you with her to live in another world, with her and all our kindred. Alas! you survived her noble attempt.

Behold, therefore, my son, what transpired.

I had my eyes fixed on the cage where I supposed you and your sister to be confined, when I saw a magnificently dressed old man enter the stall; it was the rich and noble Lord Trymalcion, as debilitated by profligacy as by age; his cold and lustreless eyes, utterly devoid of animation, seemed like those of a corpse, and his hideous, wrinkled face was covered with a thick coat of paint. He wore a light curled peruke, gold ear-rings set with precious stones, and a large bouquet at the girdle of his long robe, which his cloak of red plush half disclosed. He dragged himself along painfully, supported on either side by two young slaves fifteen or sixteen years old, dressed splendidly, but in so strange and effeminate a fashion that I knew not whether to take them for boys or girls. Two other older slaves followed—one carrying his master's furred pelisse, and the other a gold cup.

The owner of the stall eagerly hastened to meet Trymalcion, and addressed him respectfully, then brought a stool upon which the old man seated himself. The seat having no back, one of the young slaves immediately took his stand behind his master, in order to serve him as a prop, while the other reclined on the ground at a sign from his master, and, raising his feet from the ground, wrapped them in his robe and held them against his breast in order to warm them.*

The old man, having thus arranged himself comfortably, addressed a few words to the slave-dealer, who pointed to the three Gallic women. Lord Trymalcion, (read on, my son, let not thy heart falter at these horrors and those still more monstrous; they will add to the terrible leaven of hatred which must ferment from age to age in our race till the coming of the day of justice and deliverance)—the rich and noble lord, at the sight of these beautiful women pointed out to him by the slave-dealer, turned toward the Gallic captives and spat on them in token of his sovereign contempt.

* "The feet of the women and children," says Wallon, "were coated with white chalk."

* For corroboration of this description of Roman manners, see Petronius, Tacitus, Martial, Juvenal, and other writers of antiquity.

At this outrage, the slaves of the old man, and the Romans collected around the entrance of the stall, shouted with laughter. The slave-dealer then pointed out the children playing on the stand to the notice of Lord Trymalcion, who shrugged his shoulders and uttered some horrible words—I know not what, but they must have been horrible, for the Romans redoubled their mirth.

The slave-dealer, hoping at last to satisfy this difficult customer, opened the cage and led from it three children, enveloped in long white vails, which concealed their faces; two of these children were of the size of my son and daughter, the third was smaller. The latter was at first unvailed to the eyes of the old man. I recognized the daughter of one of our kinswomen, whose husband had been slain in defending the chariot of war, and who had afterward killed herself with the other women of our family, doubtless forgetting at this exciting moment to put her child to death. The little girl was puny and ugly; Lord Trymalcion, after hastily glancing at her, made an impatient gesture as if angry that such an unworthy object should be offered to his eyes. She was led back to the cage by a keeper. The other two children remained standing there, still vailed.

My son, I saw this from the slave-dealer's stall, with my handcuffed wrists bound behind my back with a double iron chain, my legs chained together, and both feet shackled with fetters of prodigious weight. I still felt myself under the dominion of sorcery; yet my blood, hitherto congealed in my veins, began to circulate more and more rapidly—a vague tremor ran through my limbs from time to time—the awakening was approaching. I was not the only one that shuddered; the three young Gallic women and the matron, forgetting their despair, felt their womanly and motherly hearts filled with painful horror at the fate of these children about to become the prey of this horrible old man. Half naked as they were, they no longer thought of hiding themselves from the licentious gaze of the spectators without, but fixed their eyes with a sort of maternal terror on the two vailed children, while the matron, bound to a stake, her eyes flashing and her teeth gnashing with impotent rage, raised her chained hands to heaven, as if to invoke the punishment of the gods on these abominations.

At a sign from Lord Trymalcion, the vails fell, and I recognized you both—thou, my son Sylvest, and thy sister Siomara. Read on, my son, read on, and wait.

You were both pale and emaciated; you trembled with fear, and your tear-stained faces told of suffering. The long fair hair of my little girl flowed over her shoulders; neither of you dared to lift your eyes, but both stood hand and hand, clinging close together. In spite of the terror depicted on her face, I saw my daughter in her rare, childish beauty—accursed beauty, for at the sight, the dull eyes of Lord Trymalcion kindled and sparkled like burning coals in his wrinkled countenance, covered with paint. He started up and extended his fleshless hands toward my child, while a frightful smile disclosed his yellow teeth. Siomara drew back in terror, and clung to your neck. The slave-dealer soon separated you, and brought her to the old man; the latter, pushing away the slave that was reclining at his feet, took her in his lap, and easily mastered the efforts which she made to escape, shrieking loudly all the while; then broke the strings which fastened her little dress, and stripped her half naked to look at her neck and shoulders, while the slave-dealer held you, my son.

And I, the father of the two victims, I, who had witnessed all this, loaded with chains, what did I do? Read on, my son, and wait.

At this crime of Lord Trymalcion—the most execrable of crimes, to outrage the purity of a child!—the three young women and the matron made a desperate but vain effort to break their chains, and began to utter imprecations and groans. Lord Trymalcion peaceably finished his atrocious examination, and addressed a few words to the slave-dealer, whereupon a keeper readjusted the dress of my child, who was more dead than alive, enveloped her in a long vail, which he bound around her, and, taking the light burden in his arms, stood ready to follow the old man, who was emptying the gold from his purse with which to pay her master. At this moment of supreme despair, you and your sister—poor children, bewildered with terror—cried out as if you thought that you could still be heard and succored, "Mother! Father!"

Until that moment, my son, I had witnessed this scene breathless, half mad with grief and rage, and struggling with all the power of a father's heart against the sorcery of the slave-dealer, over which I was triumphing by degrees; but at these cries, "Mother! Father!" the chain was broken. I recovered all my reason and courage; the sight of you gave me such a shock, and inspired me with such fury, that, unable to break my irons, I rose, and, with my hands still chained behind my back and my legs still loaded with heavy shackles, I sprang from the tent and in two bounds, with my feet close together, fell like a thunderbolt on the noble Lord Trymalcion. He gave way before the shock and rolled under me; then, for want of power to strangle him with my fettered hands, I seized his face with my teeth,

wherever I could—in the cheek, I believe, near the throat—and bit it ferociously. The slave-dealers and the keepers fell upon us, but bearing with all my weight on the hideous old man, who howled in agony, I did not let go my hold. The blood of the monster filled my mouth; I was lashed, beaten, and pelted with stones, but I did not quit my prey any more than our old war-dog, Deber Trud, the man-eater, quitted his. No, like him, I did not let go my hold till I had bitten a mouthful of flesh from the cheek of the noble Lord Trymalcion—a bloody mouthful which I spat in his hideous, livid and agonizing face, as he had spat on the Gallic captives.

"Father! father!" you cried meanwhile; then, wishing to approach you, I rose terrified—yes, terrified—for a captive loaded with chains can forget but for a moment the terror of his position. "Father! father!" you cried again, stretching your little arms toward me, in spite of the keeper who was holding you back. I bounded toward you; but the slave-dealer, springing on the cage in which you had been imprisoned, suddenly threw a blanket over my head; at the same time I was seized by the legs, thrown down, and bound with innumerable chains. The blanket, which had been thrown over my head and shoulders, was tied around my neck, after a hole had been made in it by my tormentors, which unhappily permitted me to breathe, for I hoped to be smothered.

I felt myself carried to our stall, where I was thrown on the straw, unable to move a muscle. Some time after, I heard the centurion, my new master, warmly disputing with the slave-dealer from whom he had bought me, and the one who had sold Siomara to Lord Trymalcion; then all left the stall, and there was silence around me. Presently, my old master returned, and, approaching the place where I lay, kicked me furiously; then, snatching the covering from my face, he cried, in a voice trembling with rage:

"Wretch! do you know what that mouthful of flesh has cost me that you bit from the face of the noble Lord Trymalcion? Say, do you know, you wild beast? It has cost me twenty aurei—more than half of what I received for you; for I am responsible for your misdeeds, villain, as long as you are in my stall.* So that it is I who have made a present of your daughter to the old man. She was sold to him for twenty aurei, which I have paid; he exacted this compensation, and even then I came off cheaply!"

"This monster is not dead! Hesus! he is not dead, and my daughter is still alive!" I cried, in despair.

"Your daughter, gallows-bird! your daughter is in the hands of Lord Trymalcion, and he will take vengeance on her for your outrage. He is rejoicing at the prospect, for he sometimes has ferocious caprices, and he is rich enough to gratify them."

I could only reply to these words by my groans.

"And that is not all, infamous wretch! I have lost the confidence of the centurion to whom I had sold you. He reproaches me for having basely deceived him, and having sold him, instead of a lamb, a tiger that greedily devours the flesh of rich lords. He wanted to sell you again on the spot—to sell you, as if any one would consent to buy you, after such an outrage! As well buy a mad beast! Luckily for me, I had received a deposit in the presence of witnesses; ferocity of character does not annul the sale, and the centurion must beware of you. He will beware of you, but he will make you pay dearly for your villainy. Oh! you know not the life that awaits you in his ergastulum—you know it not."

"And what of my son?" I interrupted, well knowing that the slave-dealer would answer me through cruelty. "Is he also sold? and to whom?"

"Sold! and who would want him? Sold! Say rather given away for nothing, for you bring misfortune to every one, double-dyed traitor! Did not your frenzy and the cries of this abortion tell every one that he was of your ferocious race? No one would bid a penny for him. Who would buy such a wolf-cub? I was going to tell you about him, to rejoice your fatherly heart. Know, then, that his master has given him into the bargain to the purchaser of the gray-haired old woman, who is just fit to turn a mill-wheel."

"Who is this purchaser?" I asked. "What will he do with my son?"

"The purchaser! It is your master, the centurion."

"Hesus!" I cried, scarcely able to believe my own ears. "Hesus, thou art good and merciful! I shall at least have my son near me."

"Your son near you! Are you as stupid as you are villainous? Ah! you think that it is for your fatherly pleasure that your master has burdened himself with this wolf-cub? Do you know what he said to me? 'I have but one means of taming the wild beast that you have sold me, base knave!' You see the abuse you have brought on me, wretch! 'This madman, perchance, loves his offspring. I will take his son and put him in a cage, where he shall answer to me for the docility of his father. At the first and the most trifling fault of this wolf, he shall see the tortures

* The master was responsible for the acts of his slave as a man is responsible for those of his dog. (See Wallon's *History of Slavery in Antiquity.*)

which I will make his cub suffer before his eyes!"

I paid no more attention to the slave-dealer's words. I was certain, at least, of seeing you, or of knowing that you were near me, my child; this would aid me to endure the horrible anguish caused me by the fate of my poor little Siomara, who, two days after her sale, quitted Vannes on board the galley of Lord Trymalcion, on her way to Italy.

My father Guilhern was unable to finish this narrative. Death—and what a death!—overtook him on the very day after he had written the last words!

This story of the sufferings of our race, I, Sylvest, shall continue, in obedience to my father Guilhern, as he had done in obedience to the wishes of his father, Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak.

Hesus was merciful to thee, O my father! Thou didst not live to know the fate of thy daughter Siomara; and it is for me, thyson, to recount the life of my sister.

THE IRON COLLAR;

OR,

Faustina and Siomara.

B.C. 40. A.D. 10.

PREFATORY NOTE.

DEAR READERS:

Permit me to say a few words respecting the following tale, the "IRON COLLAR." In "HENA, THE VIRGIN OF THE ISLE OF SENA," I have endeavored to depict to you, as faithfully and historically as possible, a plebeian Gallic family, free and happy, living in comfort by the labor of its hands; and to make known to you its manners and customs, industry, laws, religious opinions, and, so to speak, typical character, which it has retained to this day.

Then foreign invasion came, and with it war—war without mercy or pity, such as was waged by Cæsar and the Romans—iniquitous, bloody, rapacious and infamous war, like all wars of conquest, ending in the subjugation of an antique country and the death or slavery of its children. To this impious war, the Gauls responded by a holy war—for the war is always holy that is waged by a people in resistance to oppression. You have seen with what loyal grandeur and sublime heroism our fathers defended their nationality, their liberty, their soil, their firesides, their families and their gods. Despite these prodigies of devotion and valor, the Roman arms triumphed; and our Gallic family, like many others, was annihilated by battle or by voluntary death, the sole refuge from a frightful subjugation. Of the descendants of Joel, the brenn, there remained but Guilhern and his two children, Sylvest and Siomara, both reduced to slavery and sold.

The following tale, the IRON COLLAR, is especially designed to show you what our fathers endured in slavery, together with the depravity and ferocity of the rich and powerful Romans, established in Gaul by the conquest — a depravity and ferocity of which the slaves employed in the fields, the manufactories and the cities, were the victims. I have, though with regret, drawn some pictures which, although greatly softened, will at least give you an idea of the nameless horrors familiar to the men and women of the noble and opulent race that held our fathers and mothers under the double yoke of conquest and slavery. These pictures, horrible as they may be, are indispensable both to the knowledge of the times which they depict, and, above all, to the understanding of subsequent epochs. I will explain my meaning.

The period in which the scene of the following tale is laid preceded the Christian era but a few years; and it is impossible to comprehend the sudden and prodigious sensation produced by the word of Christ, that sublime paraphrase of the eternal moral truths written for centuries on every page of the Bible, and in the sacred books of India and China—it is impossible, I say, to comprehend the omnipotence of the divine appeal of Jesus, the poor carpenter of Nazareth, to the oppressed and suffering, without comprehending that the frightful excesses of the Roman aristocracy, then the sovereigns of the world, had reached a height hitherto unknown to humanity, and filled up the measure of social iniquities and tortures, thus increasing the ferment of the rebellion that was destined to break out at the words of Christ,* wherever there were oppressors and oppressed.

We shall therefore relate the story of this epoch, the monstrous pressure of which caused the divine Christian emancipation suddenly to gush forth, so to speak, from the depths of the abyss where the people, despoiled, subjugated, and tortured by relentless masters, were groaning in misery; and in this story, as in all the others, dear readers, you will see, by reading the notes, that, however strange and exaggerated the facts may seem to you, I have always kept within the most rigorous bounds of historic truth.

EUGENE SUE.

CHAPTER I.

Secret society of the Children of the Mistletoe. Initiation of Sylvest.—Oath.—Plan of insurrection among the slaves.—Song of the bards on the death of the Chief of the Hundred Valleys.

AT the moment of writing this in obedience to the last wishes of my father Guil-

* The Christian revolution, apart from its social character, was eminently a social revolution. "Behold, therefore, the true cause of the condemnation of Christ,

hern, the son of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, I, Sylvest, have attained my seventy-second year.

My wife, Loyse, the Parisian, died a slave.

My son, Pëaron, died a slave.

His wife, Foëny, died a slave.

No one is left me, therefore, but thou, my grandson, Fergan, a slave like thy old grandfather, who, nevertheless, was born free—free, like thy ancestors.

Ours is an uncertain life, dependent on the caprice or barbarity of our masters. I have often asked myself how I have been able to survive so many sufferings, sorrows and perils. This life might have been taken from me at any day; I have not waited, therefore, till this advanced age to obey the orders of my father Guilhern, but, in the course of years, have written a few pages now and then, designed for my son, which thou wilt read, my grandson.

Of these narratives the following is the most ancient; the facts which it relates took place when I was twenty-seven years old, in the reign of the Emperor Octavius Augustus, sixteen years after Cæsar, the scourge of Gaul, had been punished by the dagger of Brutus, as a perjurer and traitor to the Roman Republic. Octavius Augustus ruled over Italy, and our country Gaul, which was completely subjugated, after heroic struggles.

The town of Orange, one of the richest towns of Provençal or Narbonnese Gaul, of which the Romans had taken possession, and where they had settled more than two hundred years before, had become completely Roman in its luxury, manners and customs, and depravity. In these countries, less rugged than our Brittany, the climate is as mild as that of Italy; spring and summer are perpetual; and, as in Italy, the lemon, the orange, the pomegranate, the fig and the red laurel twine round the marble columns built by the Romans since they have become masters of these beautiful provinces of Gaul.

On a summer night, lighted by a brilliant moon, a man—no, a Gallic slave, for he was dressed in livery, his head was shaven, and his neck was encircled with an iron collar—issued from the suburbs of the town of Orange. Being attached to the household service of his master, he wore no irons like the slaves employed in the fields or in most of the factories, and who were, therefore, called the ironed race.*

After passing the immense amphitheatre, where the combats of the gladiators took place, and where were confined the wild beasts, lions, tigers and elephants, the strong and acrid odor of which was perceived at a distance, the slave followed for some distance the avenues of rose-laurels and lemon-trees in blossom, which surrounded the sumptuous Roman villas. Soon abandoning this smiling landscape, however, he plunged into the forest, crossed a deep and rapid torrent by leaping from rock to rock, gained the steep declivity of the mountains, here and there covered with blocks of granite; and, having reached its summit, descended to the bottom of a wild, uncultivated and desert valley, without verdure, and not less rocky than the mountains. Amidst the profound silence of this solitude, illumined by the light of the waning moon, the Gallic slave heard in the distance, in various directions, the hasty footsteps of men, mingled with the clanking of the chains which some of them wore on their feet. After pausing for an instant to listen, the slave hastened his steps, and soon reached a dark grotto, the entrance of which was so low that he was obliged to creep on his hands and knees to make his way therein. He crept forward thus for some moments, when a voice from the darkness said to him in Gallic:

"Stop! the axe is raised above thy head."

"The branch of the sacred oak will cover me with its shade, and protect me," answered the slave.

"The branch of the oak is withered," returned the voice; "the wind of the tempest has swept away its leaves, and thou canst no longer take refuge beneath its sacred shade. Who will protect thee?"

"The branch of the oak sheds its leaves in winter, but the sacred mistletoe always remains green," replied the slave; "seven twigs of it will protect me."

"What signify these seven twigs of the mistletoe?"

"Seven letters."

"What word do they form?"

"Liberty."

"Pass on."

The slave crept onward, till, by degrees, the walls of the cavern rose, and he was able to walk, first half-bent, and afterward erect, but still in the most profound darkness. Ere long, another voice, issuing from the obscurity, said:

"Stop! the knife is raised above thy breast."

"Seven twigs of the mistletoe will protect me."

"At this moment," returned the voice,

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whereof we have judicial and legal proofs. Christ was the victim of a political persecution."—*Christ before Caiaphas and Pilate, Dupin.*

"And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry."—Luke, XXIII., 5.

* "The slaves who were unfitted for other employment," says Wallon, "were sent to labor in the fields, and as the burdensome nature of their tasks rendered them prone to flee, they were chained at night in the ergastulum, and were followed in the day by overseers, who never quitted them. Moreover, they were styled the ironed race."

"the sacred mistletoe is dripping tears, sweat and blood."

"These tears, sweat, and blood will one day be transformed into fruitful dew."

"What will they fructify?"

"The independence of Gaul."

"Who watches over subjugated Gaul?"

"Hesus the all-powerful, and his venerated Druids, who wander through the forests and hide in caverns such as this."

"What is thy name?"

"Brittany."

"Who art thou?"

"A Child of the Mistletoe."

"Pass on."

The Gallic slave, after thus replying to the questions which were always addressed to the Children of the Mistletoe as they came to the nocturnal meetings, advanced a few steps farther, and stopped. The darkness was still profound. Through the silence were heard the movements of many persons assembled in this place, and the dull clanking of the irons that most of them wore. Presently, the voice of the Druid who presided over the secret meeting called, "Auvergne!"

"Here," returned a voice.

"Artois!"

"Here."

"Brittany!"

"Here," rejoined the slave; and after him, each one answered to the call of almost all the provinces, represented at this meeting by slaves who had been sold and brought from different sections of the country to Provençal Gaul, become Roman by conquest. After this roll-call, a deep silence fell on the assembly, and the Druid continued:

"Artois and Burgundy introduce a new disciple for initiation?"

"Yes, yes," replied several voices.

"Has he been tried by tears and blood?" asked the Druid.

"He has been tried."*

"Do you swear it by Hesus?"

"We do."

"Let him hearken and answer," returned the Druid. "What dost thou wish, thou new-comer?" he added.

"To be a Child of the Mistletoe."

"Wherefore dost thou wish it?"

"To obtain justice, liberty, and vengeance," returned the voice of the neophyte.

"Thou who demandest justice, liberty, and vengeance," continued the Druid, "hast thou been despoiled and enslaved by the stranger? Dost thou labor under his lash, with shackles on thy feet and the iron collar on thy neck? Do thy labors, beginning with the dawn and often prolonged far into the night, enrich the Roman who bought thee like an ox? Does he live thus in opulence and idleness, while thou livest in wretchedness and slavery?"

"Yes, I labor, and the Roman reaps the profit; I suffer, and he enjoys."

"Did the fields where now thou laborest for the foreign conqueror belong to thy free-born fathers?"

"Yes."

"Are the sweet and pure joys of the family forbidden thee? Is the sanctity of marriage interdicted thee? Does the Roman, regarding thee in the light of an animal, separate thee when it pleases him from thy wife and children, in order to sell them to distant lands?"

"Yes."

"Are thy children, by corruption or violence, prostituted to thy master's pleasure?"

"Yes."

"Are thy gods proscribed? are their ministers persecuted and hunted down like wild beasts, and crucified like thieves?"

"Yes."

"Can the Roman beat thee, brand thee in the forehead, mutilate thee, and torture thee and thine at his pleasure? Can he make you perish in horrible tortures for the simple reason that it gratifies his malignity?"

"Yes."

"Dost thou wish to break this abhorred yoke?"

"I do."

"Dost thou wish that Gaul, again proud and free, should be able peacefully to honor her heroes, to worship her gods, and to insure the happiness of all her children?"

"I do, I do."

"Dost thou know that this task will be long; and that it will be full of sufferings, and bristling with trials and dangers?"

"I do."

"Dost thou know that it involves life—I do not say death, for the time is gone by when we could quit this existence by an easy and voluntary death, in order to please Hesus and to live elsewhere with those we loved? No, no, to die is nothing for the Gaul, but it is anguish to him to live a slave; yet, to please Hesus, it is necessary to resign thyself to this, in order to labor slowly and faithfully for the deliverence of our race. Dost thou consent to this?"

"I do."

"Dost thou swear, by Hesus, whatever ills thou and thine may suffer, never to raise your hand against thine own life or theirs, but to wait for the angel of death to call thee hence?"

"I swear it, by Hesus."

"Dost thou swear, when the signal for insurrection and battle shall be given from the north to the south and from the east to the west of Gaul, to strike down

* Amédée Thierry, in his *History of the Gauls*, describes the admirable persistency of the Druids in defending their nationality and preaching the war of independence.

thy master, the Roman, and to fight him to the end?"

"I do."

"Dost thou swear to await the day of a terrible vengeance with patience and resignation, and only to rise at the voice of the Druids, that precious blood may not be spilt in vain in an isolated rebellion?"

"I do."

"Dost thou swear to include in a common hatred both the Romans and those cowardly Gauls, traitors to their country, who have joined our oppressors in crushing the valiant common people, exhausted by twenty years' conflict? Dost thou hate those perjured wretches, who have deserted the cause of liberty, in order to enjoy their riches in peace under the protection of Rome, by begging the title of Roman citizens?"

"I swear to hate them as deeply as the Romans, and to include them in the same terrible vengeance."

"Dost thou swear, repugnant as it is to our race, to employ dissimulation and cunning, the only weapons of a slave, to lull thy master in security that, on the day of justice, he may awaken in terror?"

"I do."

"Dost thou swear to keep secret from thy masters the nocturnal meetings of the Children of the Mistletoe? Dost thou swear to endure any torture, rather than to reveal the cause of this night's absence, which thou wilt doubtless expiate to-morrow by scourging and imprisonment?"

"I do."

"In the name of Hesus, then, be one of the brave Children of the Mistletoe, if those here present in the darkness accept you for their brother, as I, for my part, accept you for mine."

The new Child of the Mistletoe was unanimously accepted. This done, the Druid resumed:

"All ye who are here in the darkness, hearken to my words: The deliverance of Gaul is distant perhaps, but perhaps also it is nigh at hand. I am about to give you good news—I, Ronan, the son of Taliessin, the most venerated of the Druids of Karnak, those sacred stones from which, let it never be forgotten, arose the first war-cry of Brittany—those sacred stones, watered with the generous blood of Hena, the virgin of the Isle of Sena, the glorious Gallic virgin whose courage and beauty the bards sing to this day."

"Oh! yes, Hena was a saint; the songs of the bards have told us of her," returned several voices. "Glory to the daughter of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak! Glory to the brave and gentle virgin who offered her innocent blood to Hesus to appease his wrath! Glory to the songs of the bards, our only consolation in slavery, for they recount the greatness of our fathers!"

The Gallic slave, on hearing this, was unable to restrain his tears, which flowed gently down his cheeks amidst the darkness, for Hena, long sung by the bards—Hena, the virgin of the Isle of Sena, whose name and memory were glorified at this moment, was the sister of Guilhern, the father of the weeping slave, Sylvest by name, the descendant of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak.

The Druid continued, "Our deliverance may be distant, but also it may be speedy. I, Ronan, the son of Taliessin, have come from Central Gaul, traveling by night and concealing myself by day in the forests and the caverns which serve, like this, for the secret meetings of the Children of the Mistletoe; for, throughout the whole country, in spite of obstacles and dangers, the Children of the Mistletoe assemble in secret. Therein is our strength, therein is our hope—yes, our hope," resumed the Druid. "Let us hope; behold the good news! The Romans, reassured by the apparent tranquillity of the provinces during the late wars, are about to recall their great army to Italy. The van-guard is on the march toward this province, to embark at Marseilles. The passage of this army through our country will be the signal for the Children of the Mistletoe to prepare for the holy night of insurrection and vengeance."

"We are ready," exclaimed several voices; "let the night come!"

"And who will give the signal for this night of vengeance throughout Gaul, from the north to the south and from the east to the west?" resumed the Druid. "Yes, who will give this nocturnal signal, visible to the eyes of all at the same hour—the same instant? The moon, the sacred star of Gaul! Listen, listen. The moon to-day begins to wane. In proportion as its orb shrinks, the Roman army will advance a stage toward the place of embarkation; its military halts are numbered. When the moon shall have attained the end of its last quarter, the Romans will be on the point of quitting Gaul, leaving only a feeble garrison therein."

"And on this night will all Gaul rise in insurrection?" exclaimed Sylvest, with impatient zeal.

"No, not upon that night," replied the Druid. "Although the winds at this season are usually favorable, a contrary breeze might rise and delay the enemy's departure."

"And if the revolt too closely followed the embarkation of the Romans," said a voice, "a light craft might overtake the galleys at sea and order them to bring back the troops."

"That is true," returned the Druid; "the troops must have time enough to depart. The revolt is not to break out until the first

night of the second quarter of the new moon. O oppressed Gauls!" added the inspired Druid; "oh! all ye, of whatever province, that are groaning in slavery, I see you, as this solemn moment approaches, with your eyes raised to heaven, all watching for the signal so often watched for by our fathers. It appears—the golden crescent appears on the blue of the firmament. I hear but one sound from one end of Gaul to the other—the breaking of chains; I hear but one cry—'Vengeance and liberty!'"

"Vengeance and liberty!" repeated the Children of the Mistletoe, clanking their chains.

"Every insurrection without a head and without order is fatal and sterile," resumed the Druid. "When the hour of insurrection strikes, will you be ready?"

"We will," said a farm slave. "On the night of deliverance, the slaves of each isolated estate will kill the Romans and the overseers."

"While sparing the women and children," said the Druid; "the wives and children of our enemies are sacred to us."

"There are women who deserve death as much as their husbands," said a voice, "for they surpass men in ferocity."

"It is true," added several other voices." "How many great Roman ladies rival the nobles in their monstrous debauchery and their cruelty toward their slaves!"

"Would you spare Faustina, then?" said the voice that had first spoken. "Would you spare Faustina, of the town of Orange, that noble lady whose lineage dates back, it is said, to Juno, one of the divinities of these Pagans?"

At the name of Faustina, which Sylvest also execrated, a murmur of horror and terror ran though the Children of the Mistletoe, and several exclaimed, "No pity for her and those like her! Death to them—the same death that they have inflicted on their slaves!"

"Faustina and her like are monsters of profligacy and ferocity," continued the Druid; "no name can be found in human language for their infamous and sanguinary passions. Let the blood which they have shed be on their own heads. I speak of the wives and children of your masters, the Romans. Though they may have often been merciless toward you, and have overwhelmed you with toil, through covetousness, they are weak and defenseless beings; spare them."

"Yes, they shall be spared," returned the farm-slave, "but our Roman masters and overseers we shall slay without pity. This done, we slaves on the isolated estates will seize the arms, provisions, and chariots, choose a leader, and retire to the nearest town."

"In the towns," said a slave, partly a husbandman and partly a mechanic, "the slaves who, at the same signal, will have rid themselves of their masters, armed themselves, and chosen a leader, will welcome their brethren from the country, and fortify their towns as well as they can, while awaiting aid from the nearest city."

"In the cities," said Sylvest, the house-slave, "the slaves employed in households, trades, and manufactories, at the same signal will do justice on the Romans and their feeble garrisons, seize the arms, and organize themselves into companies, each one of which will choose a leader, who in turn will choose a commander-in-chief, occupy the military posts, close the gates of the city, and await orders from the Supreme Council of the Children of the Mistletoe."

"And these orders will not be long in coming," said the Druid. "The Supreme Council will assemble, at the same signal, in the forest of Chartres, in the heart of Gaul. Its orders will be dispatched in all directions; we shall gain strength from union. The population will be levied in a body, in order to be able to sustain a final struggle with Rome, should she invade us anew. All united this time against the enemy, victory is not doubtful. Gaul will regain her independence, and the blessed day will at last arrive when she can peacefully honor her heroes, worship her gods, and insure the happiness of her children."

"There is hope for Gaul!" cried the Children of the Mistletoe.

"Oh! why is not this the night!" exclaimed one of the assembly.

"Children," said the Druid, "be not impatient. You have been told that the deliverance of Gaul may, perhaps, be nigh at hand; it may also be far off. Who knows? The Roman army, already on its way to Italy, may pause or retrace its steps, and prolong its occupation. For thirty years the purest and most generous blood of Gaul has been flowing in terrible struggles; now exhausted, disarmed, and chained, it cannot think of openly attacking the immense Roman army, disciplined and inured to war; we should be crushed at the first attempt. If, this time, the foreign troops deceive our expectations by remaining in the country, we must postpone our projects; till the time arrives to put them in execution, patience, children, patience, calmness and resignation. Let faith in the justice of our cause be our imperishable strength; let us think of all the blood shed by our fathers, and let the remembrance of their martyrdom and heroism console and sustain us!"

"Yes, let this remembrance console and sustain us," cried an inspired bard, for at each of these meetings of the Children of the Mistletoe, the bards always sang some

manly lay before the close, which warmed the breasts of us, poor slaves, and the chorus of which, repeated among us in a low voice, seemed to alleviate our rude toil and sufferings. "Yes," resumed the bard, "let this remembrance sustain and console us, and render us, poor slaves that we are, prouder than kings. Listen to the song inspired by one of the greatest of Gaul's heroes, the Chief of the Hundred Valleys—that hero of whom the forever accursed Cæsar was the cowardly executioner!"

At the name of the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, a thrill of patriotic pride ran through the hearts of the Children of the Mistletoe, and Sylvest doubly shared this pride; he remembered that in his childhood, before the battle of Vannes, Vercingetorix, the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, had been the guest of his grandfather Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak.

The bard commenced his song:

"How many Gallic warriors have fallen, from the battle of Vannes to the siege of Alesia? Yes, during these four years, how many have died a soldier's death for the cause of liberty? A hundred thousand—is that too many? No. Two hundred thousand? No. Three hundred thousand—four hundred thousand? No, it is not too many; no, it is not enough! Count the dead leaves that have fallen from our sacred oaks during these four years, and you will not yet have reached the number of Gallic warriors whose bones whiten the fields of their fathers!

"And all these warriors—by name Lucterus, Camulogenus, the aged defender of Paris, Corres, Cavarill, Epidorix, Comm, Virdumar, Vergisallaüm, and Ambiorix—at the voice of what warrior do they rise to gain the independence of their country? All rise at the voice of the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, he who, from the battle of Vannes to the siege of Alesia, has kept the field for four years and twice defeated Cæsar. Another effort, a last effort, and Gaul will be delivered!

"But no, the cowardly Gauls of the higher classes do not wish this; they prefer repose and wealth under a foreign yoke to the rude and sanguinary work of deliverance. Magistrates—they open their gates to the Romans; military chiefs—they leave their troops without orders or directions, and inspire them with suspicion and discouragement, and the greater part of these troops disperse.

"Some one, however, is waiting for these valiant troops. Who is waiting for them? It is the Chief of the Hundred Valleys. Where is he waiting for them? In the city of Alesia, amidst the Cevennes; there he is shut up with the wrecks of his army, and the wives and children of his soldiers. Cæsar is besieging him in person—the Romans are ten to one. Provisions are lacking; famine strikes down the weakest; but from day to day, and from hour to hour, they look for aid from the traitors, and say, 'They are coming, they are coming.' No, they are not coming; no, they will not come!

"No, they are not coming; no, they will not come! A last effort, however, would deliver Gaul. The cowards have shrunk back. On seeing this, the Chief of the Hundred Valleys shows himself greater in heart, even, than in courage. He can fly alone; the means of escape are prepared for him; but he knows that it is he, the soul of the sacred war, that Cæsar pursues with deadly hatred. He knows that Alesia, unable longer to resist, is about to fall into the power of the Romans; he knows what the Romans do with their prisoners, women and children, and he dispatches one of his officers by night to Cæsar. In two hours the officer returns.

"Morn has come, and the sun is rising above the ramparts of Alesia. What is that tribunal, covered with purple tapestry, that rises between the intrenchments of the Roman camp and the walls of the besieged Gallic city? Who is that pale man, with bald forehead, eager and haggard eye, and cruel smile, that is seated on this tribunal in his ivory arm-chair—alone, seated in the midst of his generals, who are standing about him? That pale, bald man is Cæsar.

"And this warrior on horseback that issues alone from one of the gates of Alesia—who is he? His long sword is suspended at his side; in one hand he holds a javelin; proud and martial is his lofty stature under his steel cuirass, which glitters in the rays of the morning sun; proud and sad is his manly face under his silver casque, surmounted by a cock with half-spread wings, the emblem of Gaul; the embroidered crimson housings which half cover his black steed—his fiery black steed, prancing and neighing—floats in the wind. Yes, this proud warrior—who is he? This proud warrior is the Chief of the Hundred Valleys!

"Where is he going in this guise? What is he about to do? Behold! he spurs forward his black courser, which bounds to the foot of the tribunal where the pale, bald Cæsar is seated. Then the Chief of the Hundred Valleys speaks: 'Cæsar, my death would not satisfy thy hatred; thou insistedst on possessing me living—here I am. Cæsar, thou swor'st to my envoy to spare the inhabitants of Alesia if I would surrender myself a prisoner. I am thy prisoner.' And the Chief of the Hundred Valleys leaps from his horse, throws away his shining casque, heavy javelin and powerful sword, and, with bare head, extends his hands, his valiant hands, to the chains

of the lictors of Cæsar, the pale Cæsar, who, from his tribunal, loads his disarmed and vanquished foe with insults, and sends him to Rome.*

"Four years have passed, and a long triumphal procession winds its way to the Capitol at Rome. Cæsar, clad in the imperial purple and crowned with laurels, advances, intoxicated with pride, standing erect in a chariot of gold, drawn by eight white horses. Who is this livid and emaciated slave, in rags, loaded with chains, and led by lictors armed with axes, who walks with a firm step before the chariot of Cæsar? Yes, who is this slave? This slave is the Chief of the Hundred Valleys! To-day, Cæsar has taken him from the dungeon where he has languished for four years—and the most glorious ornament of the triumph of this conqueror of the world is the Gallic captive. But the triumphal procession pauses. Cæsar makes a gesture; a man kneels, and a head falls under the axe of the lictors. Whose head has thus fallen? It is the head of the Chief of the Hundred Valleys. This blood that flows is the blood of the greatest hero of Gaul; a slave like us, and a martyr like us.

"Two years more have passed since the punishment. The gods are just. Who is this man clad in imperial purple, into whose breast a score of daggers are thrust? Yes, who is this man to whom these avengers say, 'Die, tyrant! die, traitor to the republic! die, traitor to liberty! This man, at last struck by the hand of a free man (thy hand be forever glorified, O Brutus!)—this man, who, during his long life, has been the bloody executioner of the liberties of the world, is Cæsar, the murderer of the Chief of the Hundred Valleys; Cæsar, the cowardly murderer of the chained captive.

"Ah! yes, the gods are just! Flow, flow, blood of the captive! Fall, fall, ensanguined dew! Take root and grow, avenging harvest! Behold! it is ripe; O reaper, sharpen thy scythe!"

The Children of the Mistletoe, roused to enthusiasm by this chorus of the bard, all repeated, clanking their chains with a sinister cadence, "Flow, flow, blood of the captive! Fall, fall, ensanguined dew! Take root and grow, avenging harvest! Behold! it is ripe; O reaper, sharpen thy scythe!"

And all the Children of the Mistletoe quitted the grotto by its different outlets, to return to the fields, towns and cities which they had left with great difficulty, and for their absence from which many of them would pay dearly on the morrow.

* All of this description of the surrender of Vercingetorix, the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, to Cæsar, in order to save the garrison of Alesia, and his subsequent death, is historically exact, even to the details of costume. See Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*; Amédée Thierry, *History of the Gauls*; Henri Martin, *History of France*, etc.

CHAPTER II.

Sylvest introduces himself into the villa of the noble Faustina.—The Temple of the Canal.—The recreations of a noble Roman lady.—The torture.—The sorceress.—Poisoning of a slave.—The orgie.—Sylvest meets Loyse.—He is surprised with her in the gardens of Faustina.

The moon set and the darkness became profound. Sylvest, after again passing through the deserted and rocky valley, crossed the torrent and gained the thick forest and the road to Orange. He did not, however, direct his steps toward this town, where his master lived, but took a foot-path at the right of the road, and after walking a long distance, reached a high brick wall, inclosing an immense park which adjoined the villa of Faustina, the patrician lady whose name had been pronounced with such abhorrence in the meeting of the Children of the Mistletoe. Pausing for an instant, Sylvest took from the brush, where it was concealed, a large bough of a tree, furnished here and there with branches, thus forming a sort of ladder, which he placed against the wall, and, being young, agile and robust, quickly scaled it; then passing the bough to the other side, he descended into the park.

The shade of the great trees was so dense that he could scarcely see before him; but he was well acquainted with the place, and soon reached the banks of a canal, adorned with marble balustrades, on which rose a temple built in the form of a rotunda, surrounded with an elegant open colonnade, forming a circular portico around the edifice, which communicated with the canal by means of a broad flight of steps, extending to the water's edge. Sylvest, walking on tip-toe, with a listening ear, entered the colonnade and called several times, in a low tone, "Loyse! Loyse!"

No one answered the call. Astonished at this silence—for, having been delayed by the meeting of the Children of the Mistletoe, he had expected to find that Loyse had long been waiting for him in this place—he groped his way to the staircase leading to the canal, thinking that Loyse might be on the steps; but his hope was vain. Suddenly, he saw a bright light reflected on the waters from a distance, while a breeze wafted to him, with the odor of lemon and almond blossoms, the confused sound of lyres and flutes, accompanied with songs.

Sylvest supposed that Faustina was floating on the canal in her gondola, on this warm and beautiful summer night, with her singing-slaves and musicians. The harmonious sounds approaching nearer and nearer, as well as the reflection of the lights upon the waters, he supposed that the gondola was about to pass the temple, and prudently withdrew into the shade.

Surprised and anxious at not having met Loyse, he did not yet lose all hope, but listened intently on the side of the gardens. All at once, he discerned in this direction, through the darkness, the light of several lanterns, and the steps and voices of the men who carried them. Seized with terror —for he confesses that at that moment he dreaded death—and knowing that if surprised in the park of the noble Roman lady he might be killed on the spot, he hesitated. To return to the canal was to run the risk of being seen by the torch-bearers of the gondola, which in a few moments would reach the steps of the temple. To remain in the gardens was to expose himself to the danger of being discovered by the men who were approaching the temple from that direction. Seeing the lanterns still at a considerable distance, he had time to climb one of the columns, and, clinging to its projecting capital, to reach the base of a large circular cornice which encircled the dome of the rotunda; then he stretched himself flat on his belly upon this entablature. The lantern-bearers passed round the temple and went onward. Sylvest breathed again; nevertheless, fearing lest they might retrace their steps, he dared not yet descend from his hiding-place. His alarm, however, for a moment appeased, was soon redoubled; the gondola stopped before the staircase, and the songs ceased. There was no more room for doubt; Faustina was about to enter the rotunda while her slaves watched without, or else to leave her gondola in order to walk in the gardens. Surrounded by dangers, Sylvest remained concealed behind the cornice. He soon remarked several openings in the side of the broad entablature which hid him from view, doubtless designed to allow currents of fresh air to pass through; by this means he could see from his hiding-place what took place in the rotunda. For a few moments, all was buried in darkness; but he soon heard the door open which led to the canal, and saw an Ethiopian of gigantic stature, dressed in a short orange robe trimmed with silver, and a scarlet turban, with a broad silver collar on his neck, and bands of the same metal on his naked, brawny legs, enter, bearing a torch in his hand.

The Ethiopian lighted several gilded candelabras placed around a statue representing the god Priapus. The rotunda by this means was brilliantly lighted, while the cavity below the openings in the upper cupola, where Sylvest lay hidden, remained in the shade. Between the white marble columns of the interior, the flutings of which were gilded like their capitals, were fresco paintings so obscene that Sylvest would blush to describe them. The floor of the temple was hidden by a thick matting covered with purple stuff, and numerous cushions were placed here and there. Between two of the columns, and facing each other, were ivory buffets, inlaid with shell and richly carved, on the porphyry slabs of which were seen large vases of chased gold, cups set with precious stones, and others still more costly—those murrhine vases* which were brought, at such great cost, from the East, and which are made of a sort of odorous and polished paste, glittering with all the hues of the rainbow. Small amphoræ of Saguntum clay were plunged into silver basins full of snow; and large acerræ,† filled with perfumes, stood on tripods around the statue of the god of the gardens; the negro lighted the latter, whereupon a balsamic but almost intoxicating odor rose from the golden tripods and filled the cupola.

These preparations finished, the gigantic Ethiopian disappeared through the door that opened on the canal, and quickly returned, carrying in his arms, like a sleeping child, a woman wrapped in long vails. Several young slaves of rare beauty, magnificently clad, followed the negro; they were the female slaves of the great Roman lady—the rich and noble Faustina—robers, rockers, hair-dressers, sandal-tyers, purse-bearers, singers, musicians, and many beside.‡ As soon as they entered the temple, they hastened to pile up the cushions, that their mistress, whom the slave still held in his arms, might repose as luxuriously as possible. Those of the slaves who had played the flute and the lyre on the way to the temple still held their musical instruments in their hands. Among them were two young and beautiful Greek freedmen, from sixteen to eighteen years of age, recognizable, like all of their nation condemned to servitude, by their lascivious mien, their bold physiognomy, and their short, frizzled hair, as well as their costume, as rich as effem-

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* The murrhine vases were first introduced into Rome by Pompey, who dedicated cups of this kind to Jupiter Capitolinus. Their value was very great. Nero gave three hundred talents for a drinking-cup. Pliny says that these murrhine vessels came from the East, principally from places within the Parthian Empire, and chiefly from Caramania. He describes them as made of a substance formed by a moisture thickened in the earth by heat, and says that they were chiefly valued on account of their variety of colors. Modern writers differ much respecting the material of which they were composed. Some think that they were variegated glass, and others that they were made of onyx, since that stone presents a variety of colors; but this conjecture is overthrown by Lampridius, who speaks of onyx and murrhine vases. Most recent writers are inclined to think that they were Chinese porcelain. See Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*.

† Incense-boxes used by the ancients.

‡ The number of slaves attached to the service of a great Roman lady is not exaggerated, as is proved by this passage from one of Plautus's comedies: "When she gives a supper, she brings all the slaves of her household—the perfumer, the jewel-keeper, the maids that dress her and those that fan her, the sandal-tyers, the singers, the rockers, the purse-bearers, the message-bearers, and the answer-bearers."

inate. They carried large fans of peacock's feathers, designed to cool the air about their mistress.*

The cushions having been carefully arranged, the Ethiopian placed the noble Faustina thereon with as much caution as though he were afraid of breaking her; after which, the two young Greeks, laying down their fans, knelt by the side of their mistress, and gently drew aside the vails in which she was shrouded.

Sylvest had often heard of Faustina, who was celebrated, like many other Roman ladies, for her beauty, opulence, and frightful profligacy, but had never before beheld this dreaded woman, whom he now contemplated with mingled abhorrence, hatred, and curiosity.

Of middle height and fragile, Faustina, whose age did not exceed thirty at most, would have been a woman of rare beauty, had not her regular and finely cut features been already jaded and withered by frightful excesses. Her thick black hair was seen through the meshes of the golden net that encircled her pale, high forehead. Her black eyes, deep set and half closed, appeared for a moment dazzled by the brightness of the light; but, at the first contraction of her eyelids, two of the slaves, anticipating her wishes through fear of punishment, hastily unfolded a vail, which they held between the light of the candelabras and their mistress.

Faustina wore a long white tunic of Tyrian silk, embroidered with gold, and another much shorter one over it of bright green silk, embroidered with silver. Her transparent arms were bare, and for a corsage she had nothing but a golden net like that of her hair, through which her white bust and shoulders were plainly visible. A necklace of large pearls and Oriental rubies encircled her long and flexible neck several times; her small ears were distended by the weight of numerous pendants of diamonds, emeralds, and carbuncles, which fell almost to her shoulders;† her stockings were of pink silk, and her golden-soled sandals, fastened on her feet by strings of green silk, were completely covered with precious stones.

The great lady, thus luxuriously reclining on her cushions, made a sign to the two young Greeks, who knelt on each side of their mistress, and began to fan her gently, while the gigantic negro knelt behind her, ready to rearrange the pillows on the slightest displacement. Faustina then said, in a languishing voice, "I am thirsty." Several of her women instantly rushed to the ivory buffets; one placed a murrhine cup on a jasper salver, another took a golden vase, while a third brought one of the large silver basins filled with snow, and containing several Saguntum clay flasks. Faustina indicated by a gesture that she wished the wine cooled with snow. One of the slaves extended a cup, which was instantly filled; but as she was hastening to carry it to her mistress, the young girl stumbled over one of the cushions, and a few drops of the iced liquor fell on the foot of Faustina. She frowned, took the cup with one of her thin, white hands, and pointed with the other to the wine-spot on the stocking; then slowly drained the cup, without taking her piercing black eyes off the young girl, who trembled and turned pale.

Scarcely had the great lady drank when several hands were extended to take the cup. Throwing herself back, and leaning one elbow on the cushions, while the two Greeks continued to fan her, Faustina began to play with the ear-rings of the youths and smiled sardonically, showing two rows of small white teeth between her blood-red lips. She then said to the slave who had awkwardly spilled a few drops of wine:

"On your knees, Philenia!"

The terrified slave obeyed.

"Nearer!" said Faustina, "nearer, within my reach!" Philenia obeyed anew. "I am very warm," exclaimed the noble lady, while her young slave, more and more terrified, approached her mistress almost near enough to touch her. The two young Greeks fanned more vigorously than ever, and the handkerchief-bearer took from her perfumed satchel a square piece of linen beautifully embroidered, and gave it to one of her companions, who hastened respectfully to wipe the moist brow of her mistress. Philenia shudderingly awaited her fate. Faustina gazed at her for some moments with an air of ferocious satisfaction, then said, "The pincushion!"

At these words, the slave stretched her hands entreatingly toward her mistress, who, without taking the slightest notice of this imploring gesture, said to the negro, "Erebus, uncover her bosom, and hold her fast."

The Ethiopian, with dissolute joy, executed the orders of the great lady, who took from one of her women a singular and horrible instrument of torture.* This was a long and flexible rod of steel, ending in a convex gold plate, covered with a red silk cushion, in which a great number of pins were fixed by their heads in such a manner that their points projected from the cushion. The negro seized Philenia, who, pale and trembling, made no effort to resist.

* In corroboration of this description of the noble Roman ladies, see Juvenal, Martial, etc.

† See Désobry, *The Romans in the Augustan Age.*

* For a description of this torture, see Désobry, *The Romans in the Augustan Age.*

Amidst a gloomy silence—for all knew the punishment that was in store for the slightest mark of pity—Faustina, supporting herself on the cushion, with her cheek resting on her left hand, took the steel rod in her right, and balancing it for a moment, struck with the cushion the uncovered bosom of Philenia, who was held in the strong grasp of the Ethiopian kneeling behind her. At the acute pain, the unhappy child uttered a cry, and several little crimson drops appeared on her snowy skin. At the sight of blood and the cries of the victim, Faustina's eyes, hitherto lustreless, sparkled vindictively; the smile of this monster became frightful, and she exclaimed animatedly, sitting upright, with a sort of voluptuous and passionate ferocity, "Shriek on, my sweet treasure! Shriek on, it excites me! Shriek, my beautiful Lesbian! Shriek, my dove, shriek!" And at each exclamation, she redoubled her strokes, till the slave's bosom was soon covered with a slight dew of blood. Philenia had the strength to suppress her moans of anguish for fear of still further exciting the barbarity of her mistress, whose features assumed an expression of increasing vindictiveness and ferocity. Suddenly throwing away the pin-cushion, however, the noble lady half closed her eyes and said languidly, falling back on the cushions, while her victim, half fainting with pain, sank into the arms of her companions, "I am thirsty again."

Just as her slaves were hastening to obey her, the piercing sound of two small cymbals was heard outside in the direction of the canal.

"The Thessalian sorceress already!" said Faustina, sitting upright, after emptying her cup. "By the Parcæ, the sisters of this cunning old woman, I did not expect her thus early!" Then, addressing Erebus, "Bring her hither directly," said she, "and let her boat wait at the bottom of the steps."

The Thessalian sorceress was introduced by Erebus. Her complexion was of a copper color, and her hideous face was half concealed by the long, tangled, gray hair that fell from her black hood, which was turned back. Her robe was also black, and was confined at the waist by a red leather belt, on which magic characters were traced in white, and from which a pouch was suspended. In her hand she held a twig of hazel.

At the sight of the sorceress, all the slaves appeared anxious and terrified; but Faustina, as pale and impassive as a marble statue, did not move a muscle, and said to the Thessalian, who was standing in the door-way:

"Approach, approach, thou osprey of the infernal regions!"

"Thou hast sent in quest of me," returned the sorceress, approaching; "what would'st thou of me?"

Sylvest was struck by the voice of the sorceress, which was fresh and youthful despite her age.

"I do not believe in thy science any more than I do in the power of the gods, which I laugh to scorn," replied Faustina. "Nevertheless, I wish to consult thee. This is one of my days of weakness."

"Life does not believe in death; the sun does not believe in the night," returned the old woman, shaking her head. "Yet the black night comes, and the tomb yawns. What would'st thou of me, noble Faustina?"

"Hast thou heard of the famous gladiator, Mount Libanus?"

"What!" cried the sorceress, with a strange burst of laughter, "he again, that Hercules, with an iron arm and a tiger's heart!"

"What meanest thou?"

"Look you, noble Faustina, out of ten great ladies that have recourse to my magic charms, nine begin, like thee, with the name of the famous gladiator, Mount Libanus."

"I love him," said Faustina, boldly, in the presence of her slaves, bending her brows, while her nostrils dilated and her whole body seemed to quiver. "I adore Mount Libanus; I am madly in love with him!"

"Thou art not the only one."

"I have written to him; my letters remain unanswered."

"Thou art not the only one."

"It matters little to me that he is loved; I wish to know whether he loves."

The sorceress shook her head, and, fixing her eyes on the great lady as if to read the depths of her soul, she replied:

"Faustina, what thou askest me thou knowest already, for it is known to the whole town of Orange."

"Explain yourself," said Faustina, whose brazen brow for the first time seemed troubled; "explain yourself."

"At the last combat at the amphitheatre," continued the sorceress, "every time that the victorious Mount Libanus held his adversary under his feet, before plunging his dagger into his throat, did he not turn with a savage smile toward a certain seat in the gilded gallery and wave his sword, after which he deliberately slew his vanquished foe?"

"And who occupied this seat?" asked Faustina, gnashing her teeth with rage. "Answer."

"Thou askest what thou knowest already; for it is known to the whole town of Orange," replied the sorceress anew. "Ah! thou wishest to know who was in this seat? I will tell thee. It was a new courtesan just come from Italy, of whose beauty

Venus might be jealous—a blonde with black eyes and transparent complexion, a nymph in figure, about twenty-six years old, and so renowned for beauty that she is known only as the beautiful Gaul."

As the magician spoke, Sylvest felt his heart almost bursting and his brow bedewed with a cold sweat. He had heard of a Gallic courtesan who had lately arrived at Orange, without knowing anything further about her; but, on learning from the sorceress that she came from Italy, was about twenty-six years old, and had fair hair and black eyes, he remembered that his sister, Siomara, had been sold when a child, after the battle of Vannes, to Lord Trymalcion, who had directly afterward set out for Italy; that she also was about twenty-six years old, and that she also had fair hair and black eyes. A horrible presentiment crossed the mind of Sylvest; he listened to the sorceress with redoubled anguish.

Faustina, more and more gloomy and sinister in proportion as the old woman described the rare beauty of the Gallic courtesan, listened, with her eyes fixed, and her brow resting on her hand, to the Thessalian. The latter continued amidst the profound silence of the slaves, who were considered by their mistress, according to custom, as nothing more than domestic animals, with whom and before whom a person does everything, says everything, and dares everything.

"The beautiful Gaul! oh! I know all about her, thanks to my magic secrets," added the Thessalian, with a mysterious air. "It was a lucky day for me when I heard that she had come to Orange." And bursting into a horrible laugh, which made the great lady start, the horrible old woman added, "Ah! my beautiful Gaul! my worshiped beauty! You will see some dark night—some night as dark as the grave—that the black hen has been setting on serpent's eggs!"

Sylvest did not understand these strange words, but the cruel expression of the Thessalian appalled him.

"Speak more clearly," said Faustina, "What mean these mysterious words?"

The sorceress shook her head and replied, "The time has not come to tell thee more. But what I can tell thee, and this is no secret, is that the beautiful Gaul is named Siomara. She was sold with the estate of the rich old Lord Trymalcion, who left behind him such memories of opulence and imperial debauchery in Italy."

Sylvest's last doubt vanished. The Gallic courtesan was his sister—his sister Siomara, whom he had not seen for eighteen years.

Faustina had listened to the sorceress in gloomy silence; she replied, "So, Mount Libanus loves this courtesan, and is loved by her?"

"Thou hast spoken the truth, noble lady."

"Listen. Thou pretendest that thy art is powerful; canst thou instantly break the charm that attaches Mount Libanus to this vile creature?"

"No, but I can predict to thee whether this charm will or will not be broken; and whether it will be soon or late."

"Then speak," exclaimed Faustina, who at this moment seemed sinister and paler than ever; "if thy art is not a falsehood, tell me the future instantly—speak!"

"Dost thou believe that the future is revealed to us without a propitiatory ceremony?"

"Perform thy ceremony; make haste."

"I must have three things."

"What?"

"One of thy hairs."

"Here it is," said Faustina, plucking out one of her black hairs through the meshes of her golden net.

"I must also have a ball of wax wherewith to represent the heart of the beautiful Gaul; this heart I shall pierce with a needle."

"Erebus," said Faustina to the gigantic Ethiopian, "take a piece of wax from yonder torch." Then addressing the sorceress, "What more do you want?" said she.

The Thessalian whispered in the ear of the great lady, who said, "Must she be young and beautiful?"

"Yes, young and beautiful," replied the sorceress, with a smile that made Sylvest shudder; "I love youth and beauty."

"Choose," said Faustina, designating by a gesture the slaves who stood mute and motionless around their mistress.

The sorceress approached them, and carefully examined the palms of several of these young girls, who, scarcely daring to manifest their anxiety before Faustina, stealthily exchanged glances. At length the old woman made choice of a beautiful child of fifteen, whose dark complexion and blue black hair denoted her to be a Southern Gaul. The Thessalian seized her by the hand, dragged her trembling before the great lady, and said, "This one suits."

"Take her," replied Faustina, pensively, without even looking at the young girl, whose eyes, wet with tears, humbly implored mercy.

"A cup of wine!" said the sorceress.

The Ethiopian took a cup from the ivory buffet and filled it.

Faustina became more and more gloomy; she passed her hand twice across her brow, and said to the young Greeks, who, absorbed in the scene, had ceased their fanning, "Air, air! I am stifling. No negligence, or I will have you lashed soundly!"

At this threat the two freedmen plied their fans with renewed activity.

The negro having brought the cup of wine from the buffet, the sorceress took a small flask from her pouch and emptied its contents into the golden vase, which she presented to the slave, saying, "Drink!"

Doubtless struck with a sinister suspicion, the unhappy child hesitated and looked at her companions, hoping for counsel, or at least for a pitying glance; but, alas! such is the horrible condition of servitude, that all the slaves turned away their eyes from the unfortunate girl, fearing to endanger their own safety by responding to her mute appeal for pity. Faustina, incensed by the hesitation of her slave, cried in a threatening tone, "By Pluto! will you drink?"

The young girl, seeing herself abandoned by all, turned deadly pale, raised her eyes to heaven with resignation, and lifted the cup to her lips with so trembling a hand that Sylvest heard the click of the metal against the poor child's teeth; then she drank, handed the cup to the Ethiopian, and shook her head dejectedly, like one bidding adieu to life.

"Now give me your hands," said the sorceress.

The young Gaul obeyed. The sorceress took a piece of chalk from her pocket and whitened the fingers of the slave. Scarcely had she finished this operation, when the child grew livid, her lips turned blue, her eyes seemed buried in their sockets, her limbs shivered, and, feeling that she was about to fall, she leaned against one of the tripods on which the perfumes were burning, and placed her hands, with a bewildered air, now on her heart and then on her head.

The great lady, still supporting her chin on her hand, had attentively followed the movements of the sorceress. She now asked:

"Why do you rub her fingers with chalk?"

"In order that she may write."

"What?"

"The characters which she is about to trace on this purple carpet with her whitened fingers."

"What are these characters?"

"Wait a moment," replied the Thessalian, looking at the slave, "and you will see."

The silence of death reigned in the temple. All eyes were fixed fearlessly on the young girl, who no longer implored any one, and whose fate all divined. After leaning fainting against the tripod, she suddenly seemed to grow giddy, stammered a few words, sank down and rolled on the carpet, where she almost immediately began to writhe in horrible convulsions, in which her hands, by turns cramped and relaxed by pain, fumbled over the purple carpet that covered the floor, leaving thereon the white marks of her chalked fingers.

"Look! look!" said the magician to the great lady, who, still resting her chin on her hand, was gazing with tranquil curiosity at her slave writhing in the agony of death. "Dost thou see those white characters traced by her convulsive fingers? Dost thou see what she is writing? That is my conjuring book; in that I shall read whether the chain that unites Mount Libanus to Siomara will soon be broken."

The other slaves, accustomed to such spectacles, remained impassive before the tortures of their companion; they would have paid too dearly for the slightest mark of commiseration. By degrees, the convulsions of the young Gaul became less violent, and she struggled but feebly against death. After a few last throes, she expired, and her limbs stiffened in a frightful manner.

"Take away this corpse, it is in my way," said the sorceress. "I must now read the decrees of fate traced by this dying hand."

The gigantic Ethiopian, as if accustomed to such things, took the lifeless body of the Gallic woman, directed his steps toward the door opening upon the canal, and disappeared. Sylvest, from his hiding-place, heard the sound of a body falling into the deep waters, and in a few instants saw the Ethiopian return to the temple.

Faustina rose, left her cushions, and approached the sorceress, who, bowed over the carpet, seemed to be deciphering the characters traced there by the dying girl. Faustina also bent forward and followed with a somber glance all the movements of the Thessalian, who pierced the ball of wax symbolizing the heart of Siomara with a needle, to which she fastened the hair of Faustina; then, muttering confused words, she pricked on it here and there the white characters traced by the dying slave. From time to time Faustina anxiously asked the sorceress:

"What dost thou see now?"

"Nothing good, as yet."

"Thy magic is a cheat and a chimera!" exclaimed the noble lady, rising with disdain. "It is naught but idle sport."

"Here is a better sign, however," continued the old woman to herself, without heeding Faustina's words. "Yes, yes; on comparing this sign with this other half-effaced one, it is good—very good."

"Thou hast hope?" cried Faustina; and she bent again by the side of the old woman.

"Nevertheless," resumed the latter, shaking her head, "here is the heart of Siomara, which has just turned round three times of itself. A bad sign—a bad sign!"

"I am a fool to listen to thee," exclaimed Faustina, angrily rising. "Begone! quit

my sight, osprey of the infernal regions! bird of ill-omen! I have a great mind to make thee pay dearly for thy effrontery and imposture."

"By Venus!" suddenly cried the magician, without appearing to hear the imprecations of Faustina, "I have never seen a clearer and surer prediction than these last signs. Yes, the charm that binds the gladiator, Mount Libanus, to Siomara, the Gaul, will be broken. Mount Libanus will prefer the noble Faustina to all other women. And that is not all—no, for these last signs are infallible; the whole future is opened before me. Yes, I see ye, furies of hell, with your locks of vipers. Wave your torches, they light me, I see, I see!" added the Thessalian, and, a prey to a sort of increasing delirium, she tossed her arms wildly, as she rapidly whirled round.

Sylvest remarked a strange circumstance; the long, flowing sleeves of the magician were turned up for a moment in her abrupt movements, and it seemed to him that the arms of this horrible, wicked, and bronzed old woman were round and white as those of a young girl.

The magician continued, more and more excited, "Ye furies, wave your torches! I see the Gaul, Siomara; she falls into the power of the noble Faustina. Yes, Faustina holds her in her grasp. Will she burn the flesh of her rival? will she saw her bones? will she tear out and devour her palpitating heart? Furies, wave your torches, wave them that they may show me the whole future. Furies, furies, here! here! But the funereal lights have vanished," pursued the sorceress, in a faltering tone. "I see nothing more, nothing but the darkness of the tomb—nothing!"

The horrible old woman, bathed in perspiration, breathless and exhausted, leaned with closed eyes against one of the pillars, while Faustina, unable to restrain the joy caused her by this prediction, seized one of the hands of the Thessalian to recall her to her senses, and exclaimed:

"Ten thousand aurei for thee if thy prediction is realized! Dost thou hear? Ten thousand aurei!"

"What prediction?" returned the old woman, appearing as though just awakening from a dream, and passing her hand across her brow to put aside the gray hair. "Of what prediction art thou speaking? What have I predicted?"

"Thou hast predicted that Mount Libanus will prefer me to all women!" cried Faustina, breathlessly; "thou hast predicted that Siomara will fall into my hands—that she will be mine, wholly mine!"

"When the spirit has departed, I remember nothing that I have said," replied the sorceress, who by this time had regained her senses. "Whatever I have predicted will be accomplished."

"Then ten thousand aurei will be thine. Oh! this prediction will be accomplished; I feel it in my heart burning with love and vengeance," said Faustina. And more and more appalling in her profligacy, hatred and ferocity, with glittering eyes and quivering nostrils, the monster cried, in her savage ardor, "The gladiator for a lover and my rival for a victim! Love and blood! Evohe, furies! evohe, Priapus! evohe, Bacchus! Wine, wine! Come, all of you, let all join in the dance—thou, my African Hercules; ye, my Greek Adonises, and ye, my Lesbian nymphs. Wine for all—wine, flowers, perfumes, intoxication of every sort for all, and let the dawn find us exhausted but not satisfied."* And with a frenzied gesture, the noble lady tore the golden net from her hair and bust, and, shaking her black hair like a lioness her mane, it fell over her bosom and bare shoulders, and shaded her pale face, glittering with terrible beauty. At one draught, she emptied a large golden cup, and gave the signal for the orgie. The cup went round, and soon, to the sound of the lyres, flutes and cymbals, the freedmen and slaves, incited by wine, corruption, terror and the example of their infamous mistress, commenced a shameful dance amidst horrible songs.

Sylvest, rendered giddy with horror, quitted the entablature, and, at the risk of being discovered and killed, glided down one of the columns, pursued by the frenzied songs of this infernal orgie, which were soon succeeded by a silence even more hideous than these delirious cries. Bewildered, maddened, and forgetting all prudence, the slave left the accursed temple, and was wandering at random, when a voice dear to his heart recalled him to himself. "Sylvest!" called this voice from the darkness. It was Loyse, his beloved wife, his wife through their sacred oaths, sworn in the name of the gods of their fathers, for the slave has no wife before man.

Although the dawn was not far off, the darkness was still profound. The slave groped toward the spot whence Loyse's voice had come, and fell into her arms, unable to utter a word.

Loyse, terrified at the despair of Sylvest, supported him and guided his steps to a clump of rose-bushes and lemon-trees in blossom. The slave seated himself on a mossy bank at the foot of a marble statue.

"Sylvest," said his wife, anxiously, "arouse yourself. Speak, what is the matter? tell me, I entreat you."

Sylvest by degrees recovered his composure, and said to his wife, clasping her to his heart, "Oh! I am born again. By your side I breathe a pure air; that of

* See Martial's description of the orgies of Messalina.

yonder accursed temple is poisoned — it drove me mad."

"What do you say?" cried Loyse, terrified; "have you been in the temple?"

"I was waiting for you by the canal, our usual place of meeting, when I saw some men approaching with lanterns. To avoid being discovered, I climbed one of the columns of the temple, and hiding, behind the cornice, I witnessed fearful mysteries. I was seized with giddiness, and rushed from it, not knowing whether I was not the sport of a horrible vision!"

"No, it was not a vision," returned the young woman, shuddering. "You are right; horrible mysteries are celebrated in that temple, to which my mistress Faustina repairs only on the day consecrated to Venus among the Pagans. That occurred day before yesterday; I thought that the neighborhood of the temple would be deserted to-night, and was surprised and terrified when, from the spinning-room where we work for Faustina, I saw in the distance the lights of the gondola floating down the canal on the way thither."

"Having been myself detained, my beloved Loyse, I expected to find you here long before me."

"Indeed, I came later than I wished," replied the young woman with an embarrassment and melancholy which struck Sylvest.

"Loyse, what has happened?" he asked; "your voice is sad, you sigh, and your hand trembles; you are concealing something from me."

"No, no, nothing, my Sylvest. It is always difficult, as you know, for me to leave the spinning-room; this evening I was obliged to wait long, much longer than usual, for a favorable opportunity."

"Truly, has nothing disagreeable happened to you?"

"No, I assure you."

"Loyse, my love, it seems to me that you do not answer with your usual sincerity; you are troubled about something."

"It is because I still shudder at the risk you ran of being surprised in the temple."

"Ah! Loyse, I tell you it is like a frightful dream. Those tortures, that death, that sorceress, and then my sister—merciful gods! my sister, the rival of this monster, my sister a courtesan! Oh! I tell you, I shall go mad!"

"Your sister the rival of Faustina! your sister a courtesan! But for eighteen years you have not known whether she was dead or living!"

"She is living; she is in Orange; she is known by the name of the beautiful Gaul! And to crown my misfortunes, my master told me this morning that he was in love with this courtesan."

"Your master, Lord Diabolus!"

"Yes; you can judge of my anxiety, now that I know her to be my sister. Am I to bless this day that restores to me the companion of my childhood, that sister whom I have so often wept, as you know, Loyse; that sister to whom my mother Henory gave as a presage of virtue the name of our ancestress Siomara, the proud and chaste Gaul? Am I to curse this day that tells me of the infamy of my sister, the courtesan? Oh! mine is the shame and grief, and hers the shame and contempt!"

"Alas! torn when a child from her parents, and sold, as you have told me, to infamy, she was beautiful and a slave; now, beauty in slavery is opprobrium; it is subjugation to a master's profligacy, from which death alone can free you."

"Stop, Loyse, you do not know the frightful thoughts that have passed through my mind this horrible night. I said to myself, on seeing these unfortunate young girls, slaves like you, and beautiful like you—"

"Beautiful like me!" replied the young woman, in a singular tone and with a smothered sigh. "Beautiful like me!"

"No," returned Sylvest, without observing the expression of his wife's voice. "No, not so beautiful as you, Loyse, for they had no longer, like you, that celestial beauty which is free from all stain. This night, therefore, on seeing them so young, yet already so profoundly corrupted by slavery and the terror of punishment, I said to myself, What if Loyse, instead of always having been banished far from the presence of her infamous mistress and the freedmen, by the blessing of the gods, had fallen under their notice, I might, perhaps, have seen her too in this infernal orgie."

Then, shuddering at the remembrance of this fear, Sylvest, perceiving the dawn already faintly illumining the distant horizon, clasped his wife in his arms, and resumed: "Far from us be these frightful thoughts, my Loyse! The day is breaking; but a few instants more remain to us; let us not sadden them further. Let us speak of yourself and of this hope, at once cruel and sweet. You a mother! Ah! why must slavery make me utter with anguish, almost with tears, this word, blessed by the gods, mother!"

"My beloved husband," returned Loyse, in a tearful voice, and as if impatient to abridge the conversation, "as you say, day is breaking. It is a long way from here to Orange; you must leave the park without being seen. The field-slaves will soon be led to their task, and their overseers may meet you. Go, I entreat. Farewell, farewell!"

"Loyse, a few moments longer! Wait, at least, till the first light of the morning permits me to look at your dear features.

It is so long, alas! since I have enjoyed this happiness, for it is only at night—always at night—that it is possible for me to come to you."

With these words, Sylvest, tenderly clasping his arms round his wife, who was still seated on the mossy bank, fell on his knees, took her hands, and kissed them with an ecstasy which made him forget for a moment the wretchedness and sorrow of the life of a slave. The breaking day colored the trees a faint pink; the lemon-trees exhaled a sweeter and more penetrating fragrance in the morning dews, and thousands of birds began to twitter among the foliage at the approach of the rising sun. It was soon light enough for Sylvest to remark that his wife turned aside her head and buried her face in her hands; then he saw, from the heaving of her bosom, that she was weeping and endeavoring to stifle her sobs.

"You weep," he cried; "you turn away your face from me, Loyse. In the name of our love, speak; what is the matter? Answer me."

"My love," she replied, trying still more to conceal her features from her husband in proportion as the light increased, "I conjure you, return to your master; go, go this instant, if you love me!"

"Go, without looking in your face; go without a kiss, a single last kiss?"

"Yes," she returned in a broken voice; "yes, go without looking at me; I wish it, I implore it."

"Go without looking at you!" returned Sylvest, stupefied; "Loyse, what means this?" And as his wife, snatching her other hand from her husband, completely hid her face, sobbing aloud in spite of herself, Sylvest, alarmed, forcibly drew her hands away, threw himself back that he might gaze at her, and uttered a shriek of heart-rending anguish.

The last time that he saw Loyse, her complexion was fairer than the lily; her eyes, as blue as the heavens, were vailed by long lashes; her charming features were of faultless regularity, and when she smiled—the smile of a slave, full of melancholy and resignation—her ruby lips wore an expression of celestial sweetness.

Yes, such was Loyse, whom Sylvest now beheld by the light of the rising sun—alas! how changed! One of her eyes appeared entirely gone; the other, bloodshot, could just be discerned through the inflamed eyelids, destitute of lashes; her face was as burned and scarred as though it had been held over a fiery furnace; her lips were swollen and blistered, as though she had drank some boiling liquid; yet, despite its hideous ugliness, her poor countenance still—more than ever perhaps—wore an expression of ineffable sweetness. Sylvest's first impulse was to burst into a violent fit of weeping, as he silently gazed at his wife, who said, in a heart-rending tone:

"I am very ugly, am I not?"

The thought struck him that his wife had been thus tortured and disfigured by Faustina, whom he believed capable of any crime. He started up frenziedly, and exclaimed, shaking his fist at the temple:

"Faustina, I will kill thee! Yes, I will tear thy heart out, should I be burned at a slow fire."

"Sylvest, you are mistaken; it was not she."

"Who, then, has mutilated and disfigured you in this manner?"

"Myself."

"You, Loyse, you! No, no, you only wish to soothe my anger."

"It was I, I tell you. I swear it to you, my Sylvest, I swear it to you by the child that I bear in my bosom."

"What can I do before such an oath but blindly believe this horrible mystery."

"Listen, Sylvest," resumed Loyse. "We slaves who spin in the factory are in buildings distant from the palace of Faustina, and never see either her or her freedmen, as cruel and corrupt as herself. This morning a fatal chance brought to the spinning-room our mistress's favorite slave, an Ethiopian."

"I saw him to-night!"

"He crossed the courtyard just as I was spreading out the linen that we had woven to bleach in the sun. He stopped in front of me, fixed his eyes on my face, and addressed me insultingly. I wept; he laughed at my tears, and said to the woman that oversees us, 'Bring this slave to the palace.' The overseer answered that she would obey; whereupon the negro added that if I refused to go thither willingly, I must be dragged by force."

"The day of vengeance must come; and it will be terrible, terrible!"

"Sylvest, I am not, as you know, like most of our unhappy companions, the daughter of a slave and corrupted by force from my birth. I was fifteen years old when I was made a prisoner by the Romans at the siege of Paris, defended by old Camulogenus, and was sold to a slave-dealer, after seeing my father valiantly perish in battle. I was brought to this country, and sold to the superintendent of Faustina's factories. I have preserved the pride of my race, which I imbibed with my mother's milk. Had you alone been in question, my Sylvest, I should this morning, like a true Gaul, have escaped the shame of inevitable outrage by death, sure of living honored in your memory, and of being praised by your mother Henory, whom I should have rejoined in another world with my own kindred. But I am a mother; I bear in my bosom the fruit of our love. Whether through weakness or good judgment, I did

not wish to die; but I wished to avoid the outrage with which I was threatened. For this reason, therefore, before coming here—and it was this that delayed me—I made my way into the dye-room, and, arming myself with courage, my Sylvest, by the thought of you, of our child, and of the outrage that threatened me, I poured some corrosive liquid into a basin and plunged my face therein. Is your wife worthy of your mother?" added she, with a lofty gesture.

"O Loyse!" exclaimed Sylvest, falling on his knees in adoration before this proud and courageous being, "thou art now more than beautiful in my eyes: thou art a saint—a saint like our ancestress Hena, the virgin of the Isle of Sena—a saint like our ancestress Siomara!"

"Sylvest," said Loyse, starting up and listening in terror, "hush! I hear footsteps and the clanking of chains. Woe to us! you will be surprised here. We have forgotten that it is broad daylight. Woe to us!"

"Your mistress, perhaps?"

"No, she must have returned to the palace by the way of the canal."

"Who is coming, then?"

"The field slaves are on their way to the farm. You are lost."

Loyse had scarcely uttered these words when the husband and wife were discovered among the rose-trees by three armed men, with long whips in their hands; followed a few paces off by a troop of slaves, chained in couples, with their heads shaven and dressed in rags, some carrying farming implements, and others harnessed to carts. At the sight of Sylvest and his wife, the three overseers rushed forward, the slaves stopped, and the spouses were surrounded by the armed men.

"What are you doing here?" said one of the overseers, raising his whip against Loyse, while the two others threw themselves on Sylvest, who, being unarmed, neither was able nor wished to resist.

"I am one of the factory slaves," answered Loyse, while Sylvest trembled for his wife.

"You lie," said the overseer, looking with disgust at the repulsive countenance of poor Loyse. "I often go to the factory, and if there had been such a monster as you among the slaves at work there, I should have noticed her."

"Read my name on my collar," replied the wife of Sylvest, pointing to her neck. The overseer read aloud, "Loyse is the slave of Faustina, the patrician," and started with surprise. "You Loyse!" he exclaimed, "you, whose beauty I remarked day before yesterday, on passing through the factory? Speak, gallows-bird! who has disfigured you in this manner? Is it sorcery or enchantment? Have you imitated those wretches that mutilate themselves in order to spite their masters by lessening their value? Perhaps you would like to finish this fine piece of work by rushing among the wild beasts at the circus, like other still more malicious villains, with the wicked design of destroying in your person the property of our mistress!* O you wretch! this is your own doing; you have maliciously destroyed three-fourths of your value, to the injury of our honored mistress, for now no one would want such a monster as you, except as a scare-crow for children! Oh! you have had the audacity to disfigure yourself in this manner—you, one of the most beautiful of our mistress's slaves—you, who could have been sold not only as a good worker, but as a first-class fancy slave! O you wretch! March before me; you shall be well flogged; and, by Pollux! I will tell the executioner to put new thongs to his whip."

Loyse cast an angelic look on Sylvest, which calmed the frenzied rage which had been roused in his heart by the overseer's insults and threats, and tranquilly replied, "No, you will not ill-treat me."

"And what will prevent me, my delight of the switch?"

"Your mistress's interest. I am a mother. By whipping the mother you kill the child. Now, the child is property; it grows in value, and can be sold."

"You a mother! The old song. These brazen wenches are always mothers when there is any danger of having their skin black and blue. But the matron of the child-bearing slaves will soon tell whether you lie." Then, turning to Sylvest, who was still held by the other two overseers, he said, "And what are you doing here, my prison-pillar? To whom do you belong, my delight of the stirrup-leather?"†

"His name is Sylvest; he belongs to Lord Diabolus, a noble Roman of Orange," answered one of the overseers, reading the inscription on the collar around his neck.

"Ah! you belong to Lord Diabolus," resumed the overseer; "I see by your livery that you are a house-slave."

"Yes."

"And how did you make your way into this park?"

"By climbing over the wall."

"To try to steal something—eh, gallows-bird?"

"To see my wife," and he glanced toward Loyse.

"Whom? Your wife! your wife! By

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* The slaves, to escape their horrible fate, often rushed among the wild animals at the circus.

† "The punishments and tortures inflicted on the slaves were as numerous as varied," says Plautus. "These unfortunates were familiarly called by the names of the punishments they endured, such as gymnasts of the switch, prison-pillars, chain-bearers, delight of the stirrup-leather, etc."

Hercules! this is a bold and pleasant rascal. To see his wife! As if slaves had wives—as if there were any marriage among them. Your wife! as well might the ass say to his mate, my wife! It is a lucky thing for your shoulders that Lord Diabolus is a friend of our honored mistress; politeness requires the patricians to leave to each other the punishment of their own slaves. You will be taken back to your master, and I hope that he will pay you as you deserve. Our slaves are at work just now in the fields by the gates of Orange; you will be chained between two of them and taken to Lord Diabolus."

"It is useless to chain me; I will not escape; I will return to my master voluntarily," replied Sylvest. He spoke the truth; but the overseer did not believe him, and chained him between two field-slaves of Spanish birth.

At the moment of separating from his wife, Sylvest said to her, in Gallic, that the overseers might not understand him, "Meet me at the next moon, by the walls of the park, at the left of the canal. Whatever may happen, unless I am dead, I will be there. Farewell, my adored wife, my saint; think of our child."

"Think of yourself," answered Loyse; "think of us, my Sylvest."

"Enough of this barbarous jargon, fit only to conceal some evil design," said the overseer roughly, pushing Loyse before him to take her back to the factory, while Sylvest was conducted to Orange.

Among the slaves of Faustina in the midst of whom Sylvest walked, chained between two Spaniards, were several Gauls. He soon perceived that he was not the only one of the band that had been present the night before at the secret meeting of the Children of the Mistletoe, for, just as the overseers moved away, he heard two robust slaves, who were harnessed to a cart not far from him, hum, as they painfully drew their heavy load, "Flow, flow, blood of the captive! Fall, fall, ensanguined dew!"

Sylvest answered in a low voice, from the song of the bard, "Take root and grow, avenging harvest!"

This song had been improvised the night before in the cavern of the desert valley. The two slaves, recognizing Sylvest as a Child of the Mistletoe, exchanged a glance of intelligence with him, and all three hummed the last lines of the bard, clanking their chains in a sinister measure: "It is time, O reaper! sharpen thy Gallic scythe."

The overseers approached, and the three Gauls were silent. They soon reached the gates of the town of Orange; and while the slaves were led to their work by one of the overseers, the other made Sylvest walk before him on his way to the house of his master, Lord Diabolus.

CHAPTER III.

Lord Diabolus.—The porter, Camus.—The cook, Fourspices.—Lord Norbiac.—The lovers of the beautiful Gaul.—Visit of Sylvest to the house of Siomara.—The eunuch.—The prodigies.—The magician.—Belphegor.

SYLVEST had for a master Lord Diabolus, the descendant of a noble Roman family that had settled in Provençal Gaul, conquered nearly two centuries before by the Romans, and thus become New Italy. Young, dissipated, profligate and idle, like all the men of noble birth, he would have thought himself dishonored by labor* and he borrowed of the usurers, while impatiently awaiting the death of his father, Lord Claudius, a rich man, whose large income arose from the labor of two or three thousand slaves, mechanics of all kinds, whom he hired out by the day to contractors. The latter, in turn, made the most of these unfortunates, so that their labor thus produced at once a large revenue for their master and a profit for the contractor, who, being obliged to support the slaves, left them almost naked, and gave them insufficient food, which the brutes would have refused. Overburdened with labor and exhausted with hunger and fatigue, if the slave felt his strength fail him, the contractor roused him with the whip or the goad† and often furrowed his back with red-hot rods; these, however, were trifling penalties, for escape, refusal to work, or rebellion was punished by chastisements as atrocious as varied, beginning with torture and ending with death.

Sylvest, on being taken back to his master, Lord Diabolus, expected severe punishment. After being absent all night without permission, he returned at a late hour in the morning, thus neglecting all his domestic duties, for he was his master's body-servant. This kind of servitude, which was less laborious, perhaps, but often more painful, than that of the mechanic or field-hand, had fallen to his lot in consequence of various events which followed the horrible death of his father, Guilhern, which will be hereafter described. Yes, he had submitted to this servile position, he of a free and noble race, he, the grandson of the brenn of Karnak, even preferring this kind of slavery, because he knew that, on the great day of justice and deliverance, the Gauls employed in the towns and

* The noble Romans professed the most thorough contempt for labor, but they lived sumptuously on the fruit of the labors of their slaves. "Crassus, who designed to make a fortune," says Plautus, "had a multitude of slaves, who were taught by his orders all kinds of mechanical trades, and who brought him an immense revenue, while their only profit was what they stole." Such is the moral of slavery; such what it makes of man.

† "The goad," says Naudet, "was a stick pointed with iron, which was heated red hot and applied to different parts of the body."

houses would be able more effectually to aid the rebellion against the Romans.

Compelled to have recourse to stratagem till he could successfully employ force, Sylvest, like many others among his companions, concealed his hatred of oppression and his love of liberty under an humble and mirthful mask, for, with his master, he always had some witty saying ready—yes, he played the jester, the trusty servant, the audacious valet, and rejoiced at the odious tastes of his cruel and perverse master, happy in the thought that his unfeeling and wicked soul would be lost in this world, to be born anew more and more unhappy in future states of existence. This aided Sylvest in patiently awaiting the hour of vengeance.

O my son! thou for whom I write this story, in obedience to my father's commands, as he had done in obedience to his father, thou wilt pardon my cowardly dissimulation and execrate them who forced me to it. Alas! the time to break our chains and fight openly like our ancestors had not yet come; moreover, my child, however heroic may be the character of a race, the pestilential air of slavery always deteriorates it. You will see in these narratives how our ancestress, Margarid, and the other women of our family, slew their children and afterward themselves in their unconquerable horror of slavery. My father, Guilhern, though a man of mature age, resigned himself till his death, chiefly through affection for me, it is true, to a servitude which his father Joel would not have endured a single day. No, at the first opportunity, he would have killed first his son and then himself. In the same manner, my father, always sullen and ferocious, like a chained wolf, could not have acted a part in slavery as I do. Perhaps, lastly, my poor child, condemned to servitude from thy birth—perhaps if our liberties are not reconquered during thy life-time, thou wilt again degenerate more than myself from that proud hatred of subjugation which was one of the manly virtues of our ancestors. Nevertheless, it is with the hope that their example may give thee strength to struggle against this degradation that I bequeath to thee these pious family narratives.

Sylvest was brought back, therefore, in the morning to his master. Lord Diabolus lived in a beautiful house in the town of Orange, not far from the amphitheatre where the gladiators fought, and where slaves were sometimes thrown to the wild beasts. The porter, clad in a green livery—his master's color—was chained, as usual, by the neck, in the vestibule, like a watch-dog.* Having twice attempted to escape, he had been punished with the loss of his ears and nose, which gave him a hideous appearance. In the place of the nose, nothing was to be seen but two holes, which served him to breathe, and on his shaven brow were two letters branded on the living flesh with a hot iron—a Roman F and a Greek O.* He was an Auvergnese Gaul, and was always sullen and dejected. Lord Diabolus had at first named him Cerberus, on account of his office of porter; but when he cut off his nose, he christened him Camus in derision. His chain was long enough to permit him to open the door. He admitted Sylvest and the overseer, the latter having rapped with the bronze knocker representing an obscene figure.

The slave-cook, named Fourspices, issued from a corridor and entered the vestibule at the same instant as Sylvest and the overseer. Fourspices, having once escaped from one of his masters, had had his right foot cut off, and walked on a wooden leg. He was Swiss by birth, and endured suffering with unshaken firmness. One day, Lord Diabolus, having procured a gray mullet from Italy at the cost of two hundred aurei, invited his friends to eat this delicate and expensive dish. The mullet was badly cooked. Diabolus, in his rage, sent for Fourspices, ordered him to be bound to a bench in the presence of his guests, and compelled the assistant-cook, under the threat of like treatment, to lard his spine with bacon by means of larding-pins.† Fourspices did not utter a groan, and in future his repasts were even more exquisite than usual. Two months after his punishment, however, he told Sylvest and the other slaves that on that day, which was a great festival, all the dishes would be poisoned. Sylvest, thinking this vengeance cowardly and atrocious, despite Lord Diabolus's cruelty, with difficulty dissuaded Fourspices from this deed by telling him that, perhaps, the hour for rebellion would soon come; which induced the cook to be patient.

"O my poor comrade!" said Fourspices to Sylvest, on perceiving him; "a lamprey skinned alive will not be rawer and more bloody than your back directly. Master is

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* The porters were chained like watch-dogs. "In the vestibule itself," says Petronius, "stood the porter, chained like a dog; he was dressed in green, with a cherry-colored girdle, and was shelling peas in a silver dish; above the threshold hung a cage containing a magpie, which saluted all who entered with his cries." Other precautions, even more horrible and degrading, were taken. "For the slaves who were bakers," says Pollux, "a machine was invented in the form of a wheel, which was passed round the slave's neck to prevent him from raising his hand to his mouth to eat the dough." Anaxarchus muzzled the slave that made his bread, in order that he might not pollute it with his breath.

* "Then Eumolpus, with a practiced hand, covered the whole face with the letters which are usually branded with a hot iron on fugitive slaves."—Petronius, *Satires*, vol. ii., p. 79. These letters were a Greek O and a Latin F.

† See Désobry: *The Romans in the Augustan Age.*

furious; I never saw him in such a rage. If you had been willing, do you see"—and he stealthily made a gesture as if taking a pinch of powder between his thumb and finger, in token of his plan of poisoning. Sylvest, certain in advance of the fate that awaited him, said to the overseer, "Follow me, I will show you to my master's room."

They entered the chamber of Lord Diabolus, who was in his dressing-gown. At the sight of his slave, he turned pale with rage, and, shaking his fist at him, exclaimed, before the overseer had uttered a word, "Oh! here you are at last, wretch! By Pollux! I will not leave an inch of flesh on your shoulders or a nail on your hands. I came home last night royally drunk, and there was no one to carry me to bed. This morning, there was no one to put on my shoes, dress me, comb and curl my hair, and shave me. Where have you been, infamous knave?"

"My lord," said the overseer, "we surprised this vagabond at day-break this morning in the park adjoining the villa of my honored mistress, Faustina. He was there with one of the female slaves of the house. Instead of punishing the wretch, we brought him hither, having been taught the courtesies by our honored mistress that are due from one patrician to another."

"Here, this is for yourself," said Diabolus, giving the overseer a piece of silver.

"Salute Faustina in the name of Diabolus, and assure her that this knave shall be punished as he deserves for having had the audacity to enter the park of this noble lady."

The overseer went out. Sylvest remained alone with his master.

"So, gallows-bird," cried Diabolus, "you roam abroad at night outside the city gates, to mate with a—"

"That's the way; risk the strap, the goad, and death itself perhaps in your master's service, and such is the reward you get for it!" boldly interrupted Sylvest.

"What! scoundrel, do you dare—"

"Lose your sleep, tire yourself out, and this is the way you are received!"

"By Hercules! am I waking or dreaming?"

"Oh! my lord, you do not deserve to have such a slave as I."

"There again, he is reproving me."

"But in future I will not be fool enough to wear myself out to serve you."

"And I have no cudgel here," resumed Diabolus, looking around him, stupefied at the continued effrontery of his slave. "What! was it to serve me that you were courting one of your kind, a league from here?"

"Do you think it was for myself?"

"Impudent rascal! So it was for me that—"

"All masters are ungrateful, I tell you."

"This wretch is pretending to be mad to escape the punishment he deserves!"

"I mad! I was never more sane in my life. Listen, my lord, what did you say to me yesterday morning?"

"Yesterday morning?"

"Yes, my lord. Did you not say, 'Ah! my dear Sylvest'—for when you need me, then I am your dear Sylvest!"

"By Jupiter! this is insolent enough. Shall I ever find sticks enough to break across your shoulders!"

"'Ah! my dear Sylvest,' you said, 'night and day I am dreaming of the wonderful beauty of the courtesan from Italy, called the beautiful Gaul, that has lately arrived at Orange. I have only seen her once, at the amphitheatre, at the last combat of the gladiators; yet I dote on her. But it would need a bridge of gold to reach her, and my tormentor of a father, my sordid, avaricious, pinch-penny of a father, will not die, the traitor!' Pardon me, master, for speaking in this way of Lord Claudius; but I am repeating your own words."

"What, impudent babbler! Would you persuade me that your last night's expedition to court one of Faustina's slaves has the slightest connection with my love for the beautiful Gaul?"

"Yes, indeed."

"You dare—"

"To tell the truth, my lord."

"By Hercules! this is carrying the jest too far. Mark me, do you know a certain plank, furnished with screws, weights and pulleys?"

"Yes, I know it perfectly well, I have tried it. You are first stretched on the upright plank with your hands bound above your head; next, a heavy weight is fastened to your feet; then, by means of an ingenious windlass, the cord which binds your hands is violently stretched, whence it follows that, the weight on your feet weighing you down in its turn, all your limbs are dislocated; so that in the end you gain an inch or so in height."*

"You would have become a giant, saucy varlet, if you had gained but the twelfth of an inch every time that you had been bound to this plank for your tricks. But I will have you stretched on it this instant if you do not prove to me what connection there is between your flight and the beautiful Gaul. Do you understand me?"

"My lord, nothing can be plainer."

"Take care!"

"Did you not add, my lord, when speaking of the beautiful Gaul, 'Ah! my dear Sylvest, if you could but invent some means

* "When a hundred-pound weight is tied to your feet, and your wrists are handcuffed and fastened to pulleys." —Plautus, *Asinarius*.

by which I can approach this star of beauty?'"

"But, wretch, what is there in common between her and the slave of Faustina?"

"A little patience, my lord. Now I, having but one thought, that of serving my master, who, however, rewards me so ill for my zeal—"

"Again!"

"A happy chance reminded me that a slave from my province, a spinner in the factory of the noble Faustina, had spoken to me a few days or rather nights ago, for, my lord, when you go to those festivals which last two days and three nights, you sometimes permit me to dispose of my time for a few hours—"

"For which I am well paid," interrupted Diabolus, singularly soothed by the name of the beautiful Gaul. "Go on, knave."

"I remembered then that this slave had said something about this beautiful Gaul, our fellow-countrywoman, but not knowing that it could be of interest to you, my lord, I had not paid much attention to her words. But after your conversation of yesterday morning, what she had said returned to my mind. I was almost certain of meeting the slave at the place where she often goes to wait for me at all hazards, and relying on being here before you, my lord, I hastened to the villa of the noble Faustina, where I found the slave and talked with her about the beautiful Gaul. Ah! my lord—"

"What? Finish."

"If you knew what I learned!"

"Will you finish, gallows-bird?"

"The beautiful Gaul is my sister."

"Your sister!"

"Yes, my lord."

"Your sister! You lie! You think to escape the lash by bringing me this tale."

"My lord, I tell you the truth. The beautiful Gaul must be about twenty-six years old; she is, like me, from Breton Gaul, where she was bought, when a child, after the battle of Vannes, by the rich old Lord Trymalcion."

"Indeed, Trymalcion, who died long ago, is still renowned in Italy for the magnificence and great originality of his debauchery. What! Can it be possible that the beautiful Gaul is your sister?" returned Diabolus, having wholly forgotten his anger. "She your sister!"

Sylvest, although it cost him much to speak of his wife and sister with this seeming levity, had resigned himself to this stratagem in order to carry out his plans. His conversation with his master was interrupted by the arrival of a friend of Diabolus, a rich young Gaul from Gascony, by the name of Norbiac, the son of one of those traitors who supported the Roman Conquest.

Diabolus was celebrated for his profligacy, his debts, and his mistresses; Lord Norbiac took him as his model, striving to imitate his insolence, his depravity, and even the cut of his garments; for these degenerate Gauls, abjuring their costumes, language, and gods, were vain of servilely copying the manners and customs as well as the vices of the Romans.

After exchanging a few friendly greetings, Sylvest's master said to the young Gaul, "You will allow me, Norbiac, to be shaved before you; I am very late with my toilette this morning, thanks to this knave," pointing to Sylvest, "whom I was about to flog soundly when you entered."

"I knocked down one of my slaves this morning," answered Norbiac, puffing out his cheeks. "It is the only way to treat these animals."

Sylvest set about shaving Diabolus. Every time that the slave held his master's throat in his grasp and passed the blade of the razor over it, he asked himself, with an astonishment that was always new, whether it was through excessive confidence in his slaves or excessive contempt for them that an often ruthless master thus daily put his life at their mercy; he, however, would have been incapable of avenging himself by so cowardly a murder. While he shaved Diabolus, the latter continued his conversation with Norbiac.

"I come to bring you bad news, and to ask you a favor, my dear Diabolus," said the young Gaul.

"Let us first get the bad news off our hands, and then speak of the service that I can render you. Trouble before pleasure."

"O my friend! there is nobody like you Romans for polite speeches. 'Trouble before pleasure!'" repeated Norbiac, with a delighted air. "What barbarians we are compared with you, we of the coarse and savage Gallic race! Well, so be it; let us get the bad news off our hands."

"What is it?"

"I have just learned from one of my friends, who is lately from Central Gaul, that our brave Roman army has set out, alas! on its return to Italy."

"You say *our* brave army—you conquered Gauls," returned Diabolus, laughing. "This is being of a peaceful disposition."

"Certainly, our brave Roman army; and is it not, indeed, our brave army, our dear army, our well-beloved army, the protector of our safety and our pleasures? Let it depart, as Octavius Augustus has ordered, and what shall we see? Disturbances springing up anew—the wretched population of Western and Central Gaul, with great difficulty repressed, attempting to rise again at the voice of their abominable Druids. Then new Chiefs of the Hundred Valleys, new Ambiorixes and new Drapeses, will rise from the earth, for the more

of these mad beasts are killed, the more spring up anew; the rebellion will gain ground and reach here, and then, I ask you, what will become of our pleasures, our mad orgies, our feasts lasting from sun to sun?"

"Don't be alarmed, Norbiac. Octavius Augustus knows what he is about; if he withdraws the Roman army from Central and Western Gaul, it is because he is certain that all thought of rebellion is extinct among your barbarous countrymen. Ah! they have been so often and so rudely chastised by the great Cæsar that they have been forced to abandon their ridiculous ideas of independence. And then, do you see, with a good iron yoke, a sharp goad, and a heavy cart behind them, and with little sleep and less food besides, the most savage bulls are tamed in the long run."

"The gods hear you, my dear Diabolus! Nevertheless, I am still uneasy. If you but knew to what lengths these brutes can be led by the insipid words, Liberty and independence! Now, I ask, in what way you Romans have oppressed us since we have been conquered by you? Do you render our wine less generous, our mistresses less beautiful, our repasts less delicious, our horses less fiery, our apparel less splendid? Because we are Roman subjects, instead of being independent Gauls, as these ferocious beasts say, do we dine with less appetite? We pay heavy taxes—agreed; but what is the tax to us nobles—a mite from our superfluity! But we are governed by foreigners, as they say again! Well, where is the harm? At least, we enjoy in peace what is left us. If we revolt, on the contrary, what do we gain by it, except the risk of either losing our lives or being dragged into slavery? For my part, when I see Gauls slaves, I say to them, 'So much the better, you fools; you see whither the love of liberty leads you!' My father believed in no such nonsense; he sold his property, and settled in this smiling Provence, under the protection of the Romans, where he lived, and where I live, happy."

"And instead of worshiping your gloomy and barbarous divinities, my dear Norbiac," returned Diabolus, laughing, "you adore the merry Bacchus, with his green vine-branches, the stalwart Priapus, the graceful Ganymede, and Venus Aphrodite, the goddess of easy amours."

"Hold! Diabolus, I am doubly ashamed of being a Gaul when I think that, for innumerable ages, my fathers were barbarous and stupid enough to bow before those frowning deities who taught them how to die—to die with pride. By Bacchus and Venus! your smiling gods, what we should learn is how to live—to live joyously; and in the profession and practice of a joyous life, I bow before you, noble Romans, as an humble pupil; for if you rule the world by arms, you subjugate it by pleasure," added Norbiac, seeming greatly elated at his own wit. "But now that I have told you my bad news, though I do not share your security, I come to the service which I have to ask of you."

"A word, my dear Norbiac. You are a neighbor of Junius; do you know how his daughter, the beautiful Lydia, is?"

"She is dead, my dear Diabolus; she died this morning at daybreak."

"That is what I feared, for yesterday morning there was little hope of saving her."

"Poor young girl! A vestal could not have been chaster, they say."

"For which reason, she excited as much admiration as curiosity, for vestals are rare at Orange, my dear Norbiac. Ah! the watchers at Lydia's tomb will have a hard task to-night."

"Why?"

"Are you ignorant that the sorceresses are constantly prowling about the tombs, in order to carry thence some human relic for their enchantments?"*

"Indeed, I have heard say so."

"And it appears that the body of a young virgin is especially valuable for their sorceries; therefore, as few women die vestals at Orange, as you just remarked, the watchers at Lydia's tomb will have to guard against the attacks of the sorceresses. Junius is one of my friends. He will be inconsolable for his daughter's death. May Bacchus and Venus come to his aid! And now, my dear Norbiac, tell me what service I can render you, and dispose of me as you please."

"Your charming poet Ovid has just written the Art of Love; but what is the art of loving without the art of pleasing?" And Norbiac smiled again complacently at his own wit. "Now I humbly acknowledge you a finished master in the art of pleasing, my dear Diabolus, therefore I, a Gallic barbarian, come to you for counsel."

"Are you in love?"

"Passionately, desperately, madly."

"With a woman?"

"What!" said Norbiac, surprised; then, recollecting himself, he replied, laughing, "What a novice I am still! Yes, I am in love with a woman—and you will laugh at the lowness of my tastes—I love a courtesan."

"The beautiful Gaul, perhaps?"

"Whence comes your astonishment, Diabolus? Are you, too, in love with her?"

"I! By Hercules! I care as much for

* "You who keep watch over the tombs must always be on the alert, for these cursed sorceresses transform themselves into all sorts of animals, and glide about in secret in such a manner as even to deceive the eye of the sun."—Apuleius, *The Metamorphosis.*

the beautiful Gaul as I do for this knave, who never was so long in shaving me, and who will be flogged soundly if he does not make haste. Will you ever finish, rascal?"

"My lord, you move about so much while talking that I am afraid of cutting you," said Sylvest.

"Be guilty of such a piece of awkwardness, and I warn you, for the slightest scratch on my chin, a piece of flesh will be cut from your back. You were saying, my dear Norbiac, that you are madly in love with the beautiful Gaul. Without sharing your taste, I approve of it, for, by Venus! her goddess, it would be impossible to be more charming. But what stops you? You are rich, very rich; you have a golden key; Jupiter made use of it to gain access to Danæ; follow his example."

"How much this example proves the superiority of your gods over ours! These divine lessons are not found among our stern deities. But, alas! the golden key is of no use in entering the house of the beautiful Gaul."

"What! a courtesan!"

"Don't you know, then, my dear Diabolus, that she is not a common courtesan?"

"And how does she differ from the rest of the tribe?"

"Vastly and in many ways. In the first place, you know that as soon as a celebrated courtesan enters the town, those worthy old hags, of whom your obliging Mercury is the patron—another amiable god—"

"They all are, except Pluto; and he also amuses himself at times in ruffling the Fates."

"I say, therefore, that immediately on the arrival of a new courtesan, these worthy old hags, of whom we were speaking, repair to her to offer her their services."

"Doubtless, just as pilots offer their services to the captains entering the harbor; it is the law of trade."

"Well, not only have these hags been denied access to the beautiful Gaul, but they have been abruptly received and rudely shown the door by an old eunuch, as savage as Cerberus."

"Hem! this begins to be ominous for you, my dear Norbiac."

"That is not all; for you must know that I have half a score of spies in the field."

"A good precaution."

"The beautiful Gaul lives in a cottage near the temple of Diana; my spies have not taken their eyes off her dwelling since the day that I saw her at the amphitheatre, where she made so great a sensation."

"It is true, I was there. You say, my dear Norbiac, that your spies—"

"Have been on the watch, by turns, night and day, and, save two servant-girls, they have seen no one enter the house of the Gaul. I know not how many letters, chariots and horsemen have stopped at her door, but the old eunuch, with his savage countenance, has always sent them away without listening to a word."

"Then what has she come to Orange for?"

"That is what every one asks. At last, day before yesterday, some young nobles, thinking this shyness of the beautiful Gaul a piece of impertinence—but you have doubtless heard of the adventure?"

"No, by Hercules! Go on."

"These young nobles, accompanied by several slaves, armed with axes and crowbars, ordered these varlets to break open the door."

"By the valor of Mars! a regular assault!"

"The assault was as useless as the other attempts had been, for, thanks to some secret intelligence, the prefect of the town was almost instantly informed that the courtesan's house was besieged, and sent a centurion and a band of soldiers to her aid. In spite of the rank of the young nobles, two of them were arrested and sent to the prætorian prison."

Sylvest had prolonged his duties as much as possible in order to listen to this conversation, which deeply interested him; fearing, however, to awaken the suspicions of his master, he was about to leave the room when Diabolus ordered him to remain; then addressing Norbiac, he said:

"I commanded this knave to stay because he can be of service to us."

"What! this slave!" exclaimed Norbiac.

"I will explain myself directly. Proceed."

Sylvest took his stand in a corner of the room, at once pleased and surprised at his master's order.

Norbiac continued, "I have scarcely anything more to tell you, my dear Diabolus, except that I went in person to brave this Cerberus, an old eunuch with a pallid face and as large as a hogshead, and offered him five hundred aurei for himself, if he would only listen to me."

"By Plutus! that was speaking, and, above all, acting like a sensible man. Well, did the eunuch open his ears?"

"He answered me in some barbarous tongue, I know not what, half Roman—"

"And half Gallic, perhaps?" said Diabolus, sarcastically.

"Probably; for, the gods be thanked, I have almost forgotten the little taught me by my nurse of this rude language; but, in fine, I understood the eunuch well enough to be certain that all my offers would be in vain. Now, my dear Diabolus, what do you advise me to do? Not only am I madly enamored of this beautiful Gaul, but this resistance and difficulty heightens my passion. Think what it would be to triumph where so many others have failed!"

"It would make your reputation; no one but you would be talked of in Orange for a week."

"I said to myself, therefore, my dear Diabolus alone can counsel me, a finished master as he is in seduction and intrigue."

"My dear Norbiac, make an offering to Venus this evening of two pairs of doves, of chased gold. The priests of the good goddess prefer gold to feathers."

"An offering to Venus! Why?"

"That she may smile on you."

"Explain yourself."

"Come here," said Diabolus, addressing Sylvest, who obeyed. His master resumed, "My dear Norbiac, look at this varlet."

"This slave—your valet?"

"Yes, examine him attentively."

"Is this a jest?"

"No, by Hercules! Look, do you not find a certain vague resemblance, something like that between a goose and a swan?"

"A resemblance to what swan?"

"The beautiful Gaul whom you love."

"She! You are jesting!"

"I am not jesting. Upon this shaven poll fancy fair hair, and, instead of this face browned by the sun, imagine a complexion like lilies and roses."

"Indeed, I had not attentively looked at this slave," said Norbiac, scrutinizing Sylvest; "he is fair, with black eyes, like the beautiful Gaul. Yes, the more I look at him, the more plainly I perceive a vague resemblance."

"That arises doubtless from the fact that he had not altogether the same father as his sister," said Diabolus, bursting into a laugh. Sylvest felt that if he had had his master at that moment under his razor he might have slain him. "But, in fine," resumed Diabolus, "the father is sufficiently represented for you to recognize in this knave the brother of the beautiful Gaul."

"This slave her brother!"

"He and your beauty were sold when children, eighteen years ago, after the battle of Vannes. He has just told me the story. Is this true, gallows-bird?"

"It is the truth, master," replied Sylvest, fancying himself dreaming, for he could not imagine his master's designs.

"You are her brother," cried the Gaul, addressing Sylvest; "then you must know her."

Diabolus interrupted him. "He only learned his relationship yesterday," he hastened to say; "till then he had not seen the beautiful Gaul and was ignorant that she was his sister. Do you understand now, my dear Norbiac, that though the door has been shut in the face of procuresses and rich nobles, it will open to a brother?"

"Ah! Diabolus, my friend, my generous friend, you have saved me!"

"Now, mark me well; there is not only no courtesan, but no woman, no patrician lady, no empress that cannot be bought; you have only to choose the right moment and offer the right price."

"My whole fortune, if necessary."

"That is something."

"My uncle is very rich; I will borrow on my inheritance."

"That perhaps will be sufficient. But you know, or you ought to know, my dear Norbiac, that a woman always likes to have an earnest of the promises made her; there are so many cheats, even among us nobles. I am certain, therefore, that if this valet first presents himself in your behalf with a good-sized casket of gold, as a mere sample of your munificence—"

"Diabolus, you are a jewel of a friend; I will hasten to my banker's for two thousand aurei. But can you answer for this slave?"

"He knows in the first place that I would cut off his hands and feet if he refused to serve you; then, as his race is naturally addicted to pilfering, I shall not quit him till I have seen him enter the house of the beautiful Gaul."

"Ah! my friend, these are services that can never be requited," exclaimed Norbiac. "My litter is below; I will go for the gold, and return directly."

He quitted the house. Sylvest, left alone with his master, gazed at him with astonishment.

"Now, we must have a little talk together, knave. Do you understand my plan?"

"No."

"What a simpleton. As a brother, you will have access to your sister."

"Perhaps so, my lord. I am not sure of it."

"I will flay you alive if you do not gain entrance to-day to her house. Is that clear?"

"Perfectly so, my lord. I will therefore introduce myself into my sister's house."

"With the Gaul's casket of gold."

"Which I am to offer as a sample of Lord Norbiac's generosity?"

"Of Lord Diabolus's, you blockhead. Yes, you are to offer this casket to the beautiful Gaul as a trifling proof of the munificence of your master, who has accompanied you, you are to say, to the door of the house; to convince your sister of which, you are to make her come to the window that she may see me waiting in the square. Do you understand at last, varlet?"

"Yes, my lord, you will make use of Lord Norbiac's gold to win the beautiful Gaul for yourself. I admire your ingenuity."

Sylvest had feigned to be willing to serve the passion of his master, in order to obtain facilities for procuring access to Siomara, and to escape, not the tortures, which he knew how to endure, but the imprisonment

by which his last nocturnal absence would have been punished, and which would have prevented him from seeing his sister as speedily as he wished.

Lord Norbiac, having brought his casket full of gold, loaded Diabolus anew with thanks, and withdrew, entreating him to inform him as soon as possible of the good or ill success of the interview between Siomara and the slave. The latter, carrying the casket, and followed closely by his master, repaired at nightfall to the temple of Diana, not far from which was found the house of the beautiful Gaul. He knocked. Presently he discerned through the half-opened door the figure of the eunuch, an old man of unnatural size, with a pimpled, beardless, wan and bloated face, lighted up by a pair of small black eyes, as glittering and wicked as those of a reptile; a few white locks strayed from his black cap, and he was dressed in a black robe, red trowsers, and old yellow gaiters.

"What do you want?" said he to Sylvest, in his shrill and piercing voice.

"To see my sister."

"Who is your sister?"

"Siomara."

"Are you Siomara's brother?"

"Yes."

"Begone, impostor, or I will give you a taste of my crab-stick behind the door. Be off, you knave."

"I foresaw your incredulity, and brought with me proofs that Siomara is my sister. If you refuse me admittance to her I shall contrive by some means or other to let her know who I am and that I live in Orange."

These words appeared at once to surprise the eunuch and to make him reflect; he became thoughtful and anxious, and, still holding the door half open, he said to the slave, fixing on him his small, serpent-like eyes, "What is your name?"

"Sylvest."

"What was your father's name?"

"Guilhern."

"And your grandfather's?"

"Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak."

"What were the names of your mother and grandmother?"

"My mother's name was Henory; my grandmother's Margarid."

"Where were you sold?"

"At Vannes, with my father and sister, after the battle."

The eunuch appeared more and more thoughtful and annoyed; he kept silence for a few moments, still leaving Sylvest outside, while Lord Diabolus, who was posted at a little distance from them, did not take his eyes off the slave. At last he said, "Come in."

The door closed upon them. The eunuch led the way through a narrow passage to a small room, the door of which he carefully closed; he then seated himself by a table, took from under his robe a long sharp dagger, laid it within his reach, and addressing Sylvest in a peevish tone, said, "A few idle words do not prove to me that you are Siomara's brother."

"I have other proofs."

"What are they?"

"I have about my person a little golden sickle and a brass bell, the legacy of our father, together with several parchments in which are related different family events. If my sister has told you of her childhood and her kindred, you will see from these writings that I do not lie, but that I am her brother."

"Unless, which is very possible, you are some vagabond that has stolen these articles after killing the real Sylvest."

"There are many other things relative to our family of which I am informed, and which I alone could know; when I tell them to Siomara, she will be certain that I am her brother."

"Come near the window," said the eunuch, "for the day is fast declining—or, rather, wait." And taking a flint and steel, he lighted a lamp, and, scrutinizing the slave long and carefully by the light, said, "Your face will be a better proof to me of what you say than these baubles of sickles and bells."

After carefully examining Sylvest's features, the eunuch shook his head and murmured, as if talking to himself, "Such a resemblance is not due to chance. Siomara told the truth; in their childhood they might have been mistaken for each other."

"Then my sister has spoken of me!" exclaimed Sylvest, with tears in his eyes. "Perhaps she often thinks of her brother."

"Oh! very often. She is a creature who forgets nothing." And the old man's features assumed an expression of sinister villainy.

"And my father and mother—has my sister also often spoken of them?"

"Very often," replied the old man, with the same expression, "very often. She is a jewel of a daughter and sister. It is a pity that she is not married; she would also be a jewel of a wife. But what do you want of your sister?"

"To see her and have a long talk with her."

"Indeed! And what is in that casket that you have under your arm?"

"It is gold."

"For the beautiful Gaul?"

"I was ordered to offer it to her."

"By your master, doubtless; for your livery and shaven head show that you are a house-slave. A valet for a brother—that is something for Siomara to be proud of. Moreover, you are playing the part of procurer toward your sister, like a good kinsman."

Sylvest's brow flushed with rage, but he restrained himself, and replied, "Chance offered me this means of approaching my sister; I employed it."

"So be it. Put the casket on the table. Now, tell me where and how you learned that the beautiful Gaul was your sister?"

"That matters little to you."

"This knave is all unrestraint and confidence. So you wish to see your sister; doubtless, toe ntreat her to ransom you from your master's hands, or to beg some alms of her?"

"In seeking to see my father's daughter, I yield to the impulse of my heart," replied Sylvest, proudly. "If an atom of the infamous gold that she earns could redeem me from death and torture, I should prefer torture and death!"

"Hear this rascal, with his shaven head and his livery, prating of his honor!" said the eunuch; and, looking at Sylvest with redoubled distrust, he added, "Have you come here, wretch, to shame your sister from her calling?"

"Would to the gods that I might! for I would rather see her turn a millstone, with bare feet, under the lash of an overseer, than live in disgraceful opulence," cried Sylvest. No sooner had he uttered these words than he regretted them, thinking that they might prevent the eunuch from taking him to Siomara, lest she should listen to his counsels. To his great surprise, however, the eunuch, after long reflection, struck his forehead as if some new thought had entered his brain, took the lamp in one hand and the dagger in the other, and said to Sylvest, "Follow me!"

The old man opened the door and led the way through a tortuous passage, along which they walked for a few moments; then, suddenly blowing out the lamp, he said to Sylvest, amidst the deep darkness, "Pass before me."

Sylvest obeyed, although greatly surprised, and glided, not without difficulty, between the fat eunuch and the wall of the narrow passage.

"Now," resumed the old man, "go straight forward until you come to a wall. Have you reached it?"

"I have just struck against it."

"Do not stir, and listen attentively." The eunuch was silent for a moment; then he added, "What did you hear?"

"I heard something like a sliding panel gliding through a groove."

"You ought to be called Fine-ear. Place your back against the wall. Have you done so?"

"Yes."

"Carefully put one foot forward, as if to try the ground. What do you feel?"

"Empty space," replied Sylvest, terrified, quickly retreating backward and leaning his back against the wall.

"Yes, it is empty space," returned the eunuch. "If you stir a step from the corner, you will fall to the bottom of this pit—an abandoned cistern, where all your bones will be broken by the fall, and whence you will never escape, for I shall instantly close the trap-door over the abyss now yawning at your feet."

"Why this threat? What is your aim?"

"My aim is to be certain that you will not stir from this place while I am gone. Wait for me."

The slave, hearing the departing steps of the old man, cried, "But my sister, my sister!"

"You will see her."

"Where?"

"Where you are," replied the receding voice of the eunuch. "Turn your face to the wall, look with all your eyes, and—"

The eunuch's last words did not reach Sylvest's ears. He believed himself the sport of this malicious old man. Nevertheless, he turned his face to the wall, and was struck by a peculiar circumstance. By degrees, just as the eye becomes accustomed to darkness and discerns objects that were at first invisible to it, it seemed to him that the wall, on a level with his eyes, vaguely became transparent. At first he saw a sort of whitish mist, which gradually cleared away, and gave place to a faint light resembling the dawn. The slave might have covered with his two hands the most luminous part of this circular light, the outer edge of which insensibly blended with the surrounding darkness. He felt the wall at this spot, and encountered a polished surface, as cold and hard as marble or steel. The light gradually increased, like the orb of the full moon, when it slowly emerges from the light vapors by which it has been vailed. This disk at length became wholly transparent, and Sylvest saw through the transparency a vaulted chamber, part of which alone was within his sight. A lamp, similar to those which are kept burning continually in the Roman tombs, was suspended by an iron chain, and illumined the place. He remarked with a shudder, on shelves placed along the wall, several bleached skulls, with long, silky hair, like that of women. On a table, covered with peculiar steel instruments, he saw strangely shaped vases, skeleton hands, the bony fingers of which were covered with precious stones, and, strange to say, the hand of an infant, freshly cut off, and still bleeding.

Near the table, a bronze tripod, full of embers, supported a brazen vase, from which arose a bluish vapor; on the other side of the table was found a large chest of costly wood, with a mirror above it, composed of a plate of burnished silver. On this chest was a red girdle, covered with magic characters, like the belt worn

by the Thessalian sorceress whom the slave had seen the night before at Faustina's temple. In a corner of the room was a couch of cedar-wood, set with ivory, and covered with richly embroidered tapestry. At the head of this couch rose a little column of porphyry, with a silver capital, exquisitely carved, on which was placed, as a relic, the hoof of a donkey, polished like ivory, and turned in such a manner that Sylvest observed that a golden shoe was fitted to the hoof, with five large diamonds in the place of nails. He at first supposed this room to be unoccupied, for his eye could only embrace a part of it. Suddenly, a woman appeared, walking backward, with her face turned from him, and throwing repeated kisses toward an invisible spot. Half clad in a linen tunic, which left bare her shoulders and arms, as white as alabaster, this woman was of a lofty stature and as slender and finely formed as the Roman goddess Diana. One of the thick, long tresses of her fair hair had become loosened and fell almost to her feet. At the sight of her fair tresses, like those of his sister, Sylvest started. The woman, after throwing a last kiss from the tips of her delicate fingers in the same direction as the first, flung herself on the couch, and thus turned her head toward Sylvest.

It was she, Siomara—yes, it was really she. Owing to the presence of the sweet memories of his childhood—his only consolation in slavery—owing to his sister's striking resemblance to their mother, Henory, Sylvest could not fail to recognize Siomara, and never had he met more dazzling beauty. Forgetting the shame of the unfortunate being—forgetting the strange, hideous, and horrible objects with which she was surrounded—his eyes filled with tears of love and admiration.

Siomara, her cheeks flushed with a rosy tint, her large black eyes sparkling like stars under their long lashes, and her long hair, half-confined, falling over her white shoulders, rested her face on one hand, while with the other she wiped her moist brow, then let her languid head fall upon the pillows and half-closed her eyes, doubtless seeking repose or sleep.

Sylvest was thus enabled to gaze long at his sister. As he gazed, tears of anguish rolled down his cheeks. This enchanting face, as rosy, fresh, and ingenuous as that of a young girl, was that of a courtesan, devoted from her childhood, through slavery, to an infamous vocation. With shame on his brow and rage in his heart, he thought that these kisses, thrown by his sister to some invisible being, were meant, perhaps, for the gladiator, Mount Libanus; then, lastly, the sinister objects that filled the room struck Sylvest anew—these skulls, with long, silky hair; these skeleton fingers loaded with precious stones, and this infant's hand, freshly cut off, and still bleeding. Yet Siomara, stretched on the couch, slumbered, peaceful and smiling, amidst these human relics. Sylvest thought it a fatal chance which, for two nights in succession, one at Faustina's temple and the other in this place, rendered him an unseen spectator of strange mysteries.

Ere long, Siomara seemed to waken suddenly from her slumber. She started up as if she had heard some noise or signal, left her couch, rose, and looked at an hour-glass, the sands of which were half run out; this doubtless reminded her of some appointment which she had made, for she hastily arranged the braids of her hair. Then taking from the table a flask of a peculiar form, she poured a few drops from it into the brazen vase on the tripod. A bluish light arose therefrom, followed by several jets of bright red flame, over which Siomara held a plate of polished metal. The flames quickly died out, after which she curiously examined the blackened spots left on the polished surface by the fire. Sylvest could not help thinking, with a shudder, of the Thessalian sorceress and her magic spells. Siomara, however, soon threw the plate aside and clapped her hands with delight; her face became radiant, and she ran to the cedar-wood chest, which stood under the mirror of burnished silver. Standing thus, with her back to Sylvest, she opened the chest and took thence a long robe, which she threw over her shoulders, confining it at the waist with the red girdle that was hanging by the mirror. A cold sweat bathed Sylvest's brow at the sight of this black robe and magic girdle; he saw his sister dressed precisely like the Thessalian sorceress that had visited Faustina. Siomara, with her back still turned toward him, again stooped to the chest and took from it a sort of a cast with a hood attached, with which she carefully covered her head, then turned and again approached the brazen tripod.

Merciful gods! Sylvest's reason was firmly seated, for at that moment he did not go mad, though his brain turned dizzy. It was no longer Siomara that he saw, but the Thessalian sorceress who had demanded the life of a slave the night before at the house of the great Roman lady. Yes, it was the magician—it was her very self, with her copper complexion, her face furrowed with the wrinkles of old age, her nose like the beak of a bird of prey, her bushy, gray eyebrows, and her disheveled white hair straying from under her hood. Yes, it was the Thessalian. Had she hitherto assumed, by a magic charm, the features of Siomara? Or had Siomara assumed, through sorcery, those of the old

woman? Sylvest knew not; but before his eyes stood the Thessalian. This superhuman transformation, which almost bewildered his reason, struck him with terror. Thinking only of escaping this infernal dwelling, he forgot the abyss that yawned before him. Scarcely had he, groping in the darkness, put one foot forward, than he encountered the pit. He attempted to throw himself backward; in the sudden movement, he stumbled and rolled into the gaping chasm, having barely time to lay hold of the edge of the plank, to which he clung with his body suspended over the abyss.

Had it not been for the remembrance of Loyse and the child that she bore in her bosom, the slave would not have attempted to escape death, but would have let himself fall into the gulf. His love for his wife, however, gave him superhuman strength; by stiffening his wrists, he succeeded in raising himself up far enough to rest one of his knees on the edge of the opening, and to escape from danger; then, exhausted by his efforts and overwhelmed by his frightful discovery, he sank upon the floor.

How long he remained thus paralyzed in mind and body, he knows not. When he came to himself, he thought at first that he had been the sport of a dream; then, the reality recurring to his mind, he perceived, alas! that it was not a vision. He supposed that the eunuch had thus made him an unseen witness of these frightful mysteries in order to inspire him with abhorrence of his sister, and to render a reconciliation between them impossible. Had it not been for the gulf yawning at his feet, he would have fled this accursed place. His senses returning, he perceived that the transparent light, though dimmer, was still seen through the wall. Yielding to a terrible curiosity, he rose and looked in. The room was deserted, and the iron lamp extinguished; the bluish light from the brazen vase on the tripod alone illumined this sinister place. In a short time the sorceress reappeared, carrying in her hand a package wrapped in a black cloth, which she hastily unrolled, and took from it a head freshly cut off. Sylvest recognized, by the bluish light from the tripod, the features of the beautiful Lydia, the young virgin who had died the night before, and whom he had often admired as she passed through the streets of Orange. He then remembered the words of his master, who had told Lord Norbiac that morning that the watchers at Lydia's tomb would have a hard task to preserve her remains from the profanations of the magicians, cynically adding that few young girls died vestals at Orange, and that their bodies were of priceless value to the sorceresses.

The horrible old hag—for Sylvest began to believe himself the dupe of a vision or of the error of his eyes, and refused to believe that Siomara and the magician were one and the same person—the horrible old woman laid the head of Lydia on a table, together with a shapeless and bloody lump of flesh, which she put into the newly amputated hand of an infant, which was found there; after which she placed the whole on the head of Lydia, and fastened it there with the dead girl's long tresses.

Sylvest suddenly felt a hand laid on his shoulder, and heard the shrill and piercing voice of the eunuch exclaim:

"The gulf is no longer open beneath your feet; you can follow me without danger. Are you satisfied? Have you seen your sister Siomara, the beautiful Gaul, the adored courtesan?"

"No," cried the slave, advancing bewildered through the darkness. "No, I have not seen my sister; this horrible magician here is not Siomara. All this is magic and enchantment. Let me flee this accursed house!"

The eunuch, however, barred the narrow passage with his great body, and forced the slave to remain where he was, saying:

"What! would you go away now without speaking to your sister? What has become of your late violent affection for the daughter of your mother?"

"No, this is not my sister, or, if it is, I no longer have a sister; let me go."

"This is not your sister, and why?" returned the eunuch, bursting into a fit of laughter. "Is it because, beautiful as Venus, she has suddenly changed herself into an old woman as hideous as the Fates. And what if you had seen her as I did yesterday, as naked as Cypris rising from the waves, rub herself with a magic oil, and her lovely body instantly become covered with a light down, her charming arms dwindle away and change into long wings, her Diana-like limbs and tiny feet transform themselves into the claws of a bird of night, her graceful neck swell and put on a covering of feathers, and her adored head assume the figure of an osprey which, uttering shrill cries, took flight through the vaulted hall?"

"Let me go; you will drive me mad!"

"What would you have said the other night when Siomara transformed herself into a she-wolf to prowl around the gibbets at the setting of the moon, and bring back in her teeth the skull of a malefactor necessary for her enchantments?"*

* Apuleius thus describes the articles which were commonly seen in the dwellings of the sorceresses: "There were all kinds of aromatics, brass blades covered with undecipherable hieroglyphics, pieces of iron from wrecked vessels, numerous shreds of human flesh belonging to bodies lately bemoaned, figures, nails from gibbets, and heads half devoured by wild beasts of the circus. * * * * They snatched human remains from the graves and the funeral-piles, wherewith to conjure the most frightful calamities upon the people."

"Merciful gods, have pity on me!"

"And the other night, when, taking the shape of a black snake, Siomara glided into the cradle of a new-born infant, by the side of its mother's bed, and, gently coiling herself around its neck, placed her reptile head to the infant's rosy lips in order to inhale its last breath, and strangled it, the last breath of a new-born babe being needed for her sorceries?"

"I am appalled! Am I waking or dreaming?" murmured Sylvest.

"You are awake, by Hercules! yes, wide awake, but you are afraid. What! wretched poltroon, you have a sister who, by her magic power, can become in turn a beautiful woman, an osprey, a she-wolf, and a serpent—who can assume whatever shape she pleases, in fine, and you do not rejoice at it, for the honor of your family!"

Sylvest felt his reason falter for a moment; he believed the eunuch's words. If Siomara could metamorphose herself into a hideous sorceress, why not also into an osprey, a wolf, or a serpent?

The old man, still barring the way with his great body, continued:

"What! blockhead, you do not thank me, after I have posted you in this good place, in order to initiate you into the secrets of Siomara's life, so that, on seeing her directly, you can clasp her tenderly to your fraternal heart and say, Thou art the worthy daughter of our mother!"

"O all-powerful Hesus! be merciful; take my life or wholly destroy my reason, that I may no longer listen to this demon!" said Sylvest, so stunned and dejected that he felt neither the strength nor the courage to escape by force.

"What! I have placed you here, so that you could also see and know your sister's lover, approve her good taste, and congratulate her on her choice; and you stand there as stupid as a millstone, without speaking a word! You know Siomara's lover now, I hope; you saw her handsome Belphegor?"

"I saw no one," murmured Sylvest, more and more bewildered, and replying as it were against his own will. "The young woman who was there—oh! no, she was not my sister!—entered, throwing kisses to some one whom I could not see; I supposed that it was to the gladiator, Mount Libanus."

"Mount Libanus!" exclaimed the eunuch, bursting into laughter. "Siomara despises Mount Libanus as the dust on her sandals. She would give half a score of Mount Libanuses for one Belphegor. What! did you not see this handsome minion?"

"No."

"It is possible; she visited him instead of making him come to her. Their rooms are on the same floor; so that, on coming out, she threw him a few loving kisses through the door. So, you did not see Belphegor; it is a pity. Would you like to know who this cherished darling is—this gallant whom many great ladies would envy Siomara, did they know him to be her lover? Well, he is—"

And the eunuch whispered two words in Sylvest's ear,* who uttered a horrible cry, for a recent remembrance crossed his mind; then, in his rage and terror, he threw himself violently on the eunuch, knocked him down and trampled him under foot, and, having thus opened the way for himself, rushed onward in the darkness, striking here and there against the walls, pursued by the frightful laughter of the eunuch, who had regained his feet and was chasing him, shouting, "Belphegor! Belphegor!"

CHAPTER IV.

The Gladiator, Mount Libanus.—Siomara.—The Amorous Lion.—Siomara recognizes Sylvest.—What has happened to Sylvest and his sister since their separation.—Sylvest is arrested in Siomara's house and taken to Lord Diabolus, who sends him to the amphitheatre to be thrown to the wild beasts at the approaching games.

SYLVEST, still fleeing before the pursuit of the eunuch, perceived a bright light at the end of the passage, rushed toward it, recognized the vestibule, and drew the inner bolt of the street-door, believing himself saved; but just as he was about to set foot in the street, he was confronted by a man of gigantic stature, who, seizing him by the throat with an iron grasp, forced him back into the vestibule and shut and bolted the door at the moment that the eunuch came up out of breath, crying, "Belphegor! Belphegor!"

At the sight of the giant, the eunuch drew back a step or two, and exclaimed angrily, "Mount Libanus—you here!"

"Death and murder!" cried the gladiator, in a threatening tone. "The beautiful Gaul shall trifle with me no longer. Since nightfall I have been lying in ambush in the house opposite. I saw this wretched slave come hither, accompanied by his master, Lord Diabolus; they paused a few steps from here; Diabolus spoke to his slave, and the latter, taking a casket under his arm, knocked at the door, which opened and admitted him. This was at nightfall, and here it is almost dawn. Death and furies! do you take me for a gosling?"

"We take you for what you are, you butcher of human flesh, you wine-cask, you desolation of wine-skins!" exclaimed the eunuch, in his shrill and piercing voice. "Begone, you tavern-pillar, you terror of inn-keepers! Off with you, you fighting

* See the *Golden Ass*, and the Latin verses of Juvenal.

bull! There is no one here to pierce with your sword, and your bellowings do not frighten me!"

"Do you wish me to choke you in your fat, you old larded capon? Do you wish me to burst you open with my cudgel, you soft and flabby pot-belly?" cried the gladiator, raising against the old man a thick ebony cane, with a human bone for a head. "Blood and brains! if you say a word more, it will be your last. Take care, you tun of rancid lard!"

Thus spoke Mount Libanus, the celebrated gladiator, whom the great Roman ladies immodestly pursued. He appeared still young; but the expression of his coarse, rude features was insolent and stolid. A sword-thrust, beginning at his forehead and ending in his thick, tawny beard, had deprived him of his left eye. His rich apparel was spotted with wine and grease, and his tunic, embroidered with silver, but rumpled and half unfastened, disclosed his Herculean chest, as hairy as a bear. His doeskin breeches and military boots, trimmed with gold braid, seemed as dilapidated as the rest of his attire. A long broadsword was suspended at his side; his head was covered with a felt hat, adorned with a long red plume, and he carried in his hand his ebony cane, with a rounded human bone for a head, probably a memento of one of his combats. Yes, such was that Mount Libanus, whom the noble ladies of Orange disputed with each other, and who had replied by a disdainful refusal to the overtures of Faustina.

At the increasing noise of the dispute between the gladiator and the eunuch, an inner door of the vestibule opened and Siomara appeared, no longer transfigured as a hideous sorceress, but young, proud and beautiful—oh! a thousand times more beautiful than she had seemed to the slave at the beginning of this accursed night. But it was not she—oh! no, it was not she whom he had seen; he could not believe it. Siomara's luxuriant, fair tresses were confined in the meshes of a silver net. She wore two tunics—one white and very long, the other, of cerulean blue, was short and embroidered with gold and pearls, leaving her neck and arms bare. On seeing his sister possessed of so pure and brilliant a beauty, Sylvest thought more than ever that he had had a horrible vision during the past night. "No, no," thought he, "a profligate courtesan, and accursed sorceress, would not have this chaste, proud brow, and this soft and noble glance; no, the infamous eunuch lied. There is a mystery here that my reason cannot fathom. But the Siomara whom I see here is really my sister; the one of last night, doubtless, appeared to me through sorcery."

Thus thought the slave, who stood in the shade, concealed by a pillar of the vestibule. Unperceived as yet by the courtesan, he waited to see what would take place between her, the eunuch, and the gladiator. The coarse audacity of the latter seemed to have disappeared at the sight of Siomara, who, with an imperious and threatening look and uplifted brow, advanced toward the giant.

"What means this noise in my house?" said she, sternly. "Does Mount Libanus fancy himself in one of the taverns where he gets drunk every night?"

"This savage brute can do nothing but roar," returned the eunuch; "and, by Jupiter! I—"

"Silence!" interrupted Siomara. Then, turning to the gladiator, she added, in a queenly tone, "Kneel, and ask pardon for your insolence."

"Listen, Siomara," stammered Mount Libanus, whose trouble and confusion increased. "I will explain—"

"Kneel first! Repent of your insolence, and then speak, if I permit."

"Siomara!" returned the gladiator, clasping his hands with a suppliant air, "one word—only one word."

"Kneel!" she exclaimed, impatiently.

The Hercules, with the timid docility of the chained bear obeying his master, knelt, saying, "Behold me on my knees—I, Mount Libanus, who have at my feet the greatest ladies of Orange."

"And I trample on them in trampling on you," replied Siomara, with a gesture of haughty disdain. "Bow your neck—lower—still lower."

The giant obeyed, prostrating his face almost on the pavement. Siomara placed the toe of her little embroidered sandal on the neck of the bull, and said, "Do you repent of your insolence?"

"I do."

"Now begone from here," said Siomara, thrusting him away with her foot; "begone from here at once, and never enter this house again."

"Siomara, you despise my love," exclaimed the gladiator, raising himself on his knees, in which position he remained for a moment, with an imploring and mournful air; "yet I never give a sword-thrust without uttering your name; I never slay a conquered foe without giving you the honor; I laugh at all the women who pursue me with their love; and when your disdain is more than I can bear, I flee to the tavern to drown my grief in wine."

"Yes," added the eunuch, "and afterward to break the pots over the heads of the tavern-keepers."

"It is your fault, Siomara," resumed the giant, in a lamenting voice. "I seek intoxication to forget you. I would submit to your disdain without complaint if all

were repulsed like me. But this vile slave," and the gladiator pointed to Sylvest as he rose, "has remained almost all night in your house, Siomara, in his own behalf or his master's; and this is why I was unable to conquer my rage."

Sylvest's sister, having followed with her eye the gesture of Mount Libanus, for the first time perceived the slave, who had hitherto been hidden by the shade and by one of the vestibule columns. "Who is this man?" said she, hastily advancing toward Sylvest; then, seizing him by the arm, she drew him forward so that the light of the lamp fell full on his face. "Who are you? to whom do you belong?" she added, gazing steadily at him. "What are you doing here?"

The eunuch appeared to await in terror the answer of Sylvest, who could not utter a word; he was striving to forget the mysteries of this fatal night, and felt his brotherly love struggling with the terror with which Siomara had inspired him. The latter, after gazing for an instant at the slave, started, drew him nearer the lamp, and, examining him with redoubled curiosity and attention, placed both hands on his shoulders—Sylvest felt her hands tremble slightly—and said, "Of what country are you?"

Sylvest hesitated for a moment. He was on the point of answering in such a manner as to deceive his sister; but on seeing so near him that charming face which reminded him so much of his mother's, and feeling on his shoulders those hands so often clasped in his in the happy days of his childhood, he forgot everything but his sister, who repeated impatiently, "Do you not understand the Roman language? I ask you of what country you are?"

"I am a Gaul."

"Of what province?" said Siomara, in Gallic.

"Brittany."

"Of what tribe?"

"The tribe of Karnak."

"How long have you been a slave?"

"I was sold when a child, after the battle of Vannes."

"Had you a sister?"

"Yes; she was a year younger than I."

"Was she sold, like you, when a child?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever seen her since?"

"No."

"Come, follow me," said Siomara to the slave, while the gladiator and the eunuch seemed, the one incensed and the other troubled by this conversation in the Gallic tongue, which they probably did not understand. The courtesan advanced toward the inner room, appearing wholly to have forgotten Mount Libanus; but, recollecting herself, she turned toward him, and giving him this time one of her sweetest smiles, exclaimed:

"You have humbled your brow beneath my foot, you, the bravest of the brave," said she; "kiss my hand," and she extended it to him. "Continue to drive the Roman ladies to despair, as I do the Roman lords; but do not despair yourself—do you understand, lion-heart?"

The gladiator threw himself on his knees to press to his coarse lips the hand of Siomara, the courtesan. This ferocious, brutal, and profligate man must have been deeply moved, despite the grossness of his nature; for, as he kissed Siomara's hand, a tear trickled down his cheek; then, rising, while Siomara beckoned to her brother to follow her, Mount Libanus exclaimed with enthusiasm:

"By all the throats that I have cut, and by all that I shall yet cut, Siomara, thou canst tell the universe that the blood, heart, and sword of Mount Libanus are thine!"

The courtesan, leaving the gladiator to declaim his passion, and the eunuch to digest the wrath doubtless caused him by the reconciliation of the brother and sister, quitted the vestibule, and, motioning to Sylvest to follow her, led him to a room magnificently furnished, where they were alone. Siomara then threw herself on her brother's neck, and said to him, with an expression of ineffable tenderness, as she clasped him warmly to her breast, "Sylvest, do you not know me? I recognized you at once. I am your sister, who was sold like you eighteen years ago, after the battle of Vannes."

"I recognized you."

"You say this coldly, my brother. You turn away your eyes, and your countenance is gloomy. Is this the way that you welcome the companion of your childhood after so long a separation, ingrate! when I have never passed a day without thinking of you? Oh! it is enough to make one weep!" and her eyes filled with tears.

"Sister, Siomara, with one word you can make me the most wretched of men or the happiest of brothers."

"Oh! speak."

"With one word you can call to my lips all the tenderness that has been lingering in my heart for the last eighteen years."

"Oh! speak quickly."

"A word from you, in fine, and we shall continue this conversation, which yesterday I would have purchased with my blood; otherwise, I quit the house this instant, never to see you again."

"Never to see me again! and wherefore? What have I done?"

"Siomara, the gods of my fathers are my witnesses, that when I learned that the beautiful Gaul, the celebrated courtesan, was you, great was my shame and grief,

my sister. But I thought of the forced corruption which slavery almost always enforces on those subjected to it from childhood; and, above all, I thought that your master, who bought you when only eight years old, was named Trymalcion. It was, therefore, profound pity that I felt for you, and it was this feeling that brought me to your house last evening at nightfall."

"Did you come here last evening?" said Siomara, looking at her brother with stupefaction. "Have you passed the night here?"

"Yes."

"It is impossible."

"I have told you, Siomara, that a word from you will decide whether I am to cherish you pityingly or leave you with abhorrence."

"I inspire you with abhorrence!" she returned, with an air of such ingenuous surprise and in a tone of such gentle reproach that Sylvest was moved. "Why, brother, should you abhor me?" As she spoke, she fixed her beautiful black eyes on the slave. He felt more and more shaken; his doubts revived, however, and he resumed:

"Listen; last evening I knocked at your door; the eunuch opened it; I told him that I was your brother."

"You confided this to him!" she exclaimed, then seemed to reflect.

"He appeared troubled and irritated by my revelation, and said to me, 'You wish to see your sister; you shall see her—come.' He led me through a narrow corridor, then, in an instant, blew out the lamp, telling me to go on. I obeyed, and encountered a wall. At the same time, a gulf opened beneath my feet. The eunuch commanded me not to stir on peril of my life, and to look at the wall."

"What!" she resumed, with as much astonishment as candor, while a slightly incredulous smile hovered on her lips. "To see me, did he tell you to look at the wall? Are you in earnest, my dear, good brother?"

"I am so much in earnest, Siomara, that at this instant my heart is wrung with terrible anguish, for I am about to hear the fatal word from your lips, sister. I obeyed the eunuch; I looked at the wall—"

"And what then?"

"By some enchantment, the wall became transparent, and I saw in a vaulted chamber a woman who resembled you. Was it you, Siomara? Was it you, or your spectre? Was it you—yes or no?"

Sylvest trembled from head to foot while awaiting the answer of his sister, who repeated, as if her brother had said something impossible and mad, "I in a vaulted chamber—I seen through a transparent wall!" Then, abruptly carrying her little hands to her forehead as if struck by some sudden memory, she burst into a fit of such frank and merry laughter that her enchanting face flushed with a rosy tint, and her eyes filled with tears of mirth. The slave gazed at her astonished, but, oh! so happy to feel his suspicions dispelled; whereupon Siomara drew closer to him, and, seating herself by his side, rested one arm on his shoulder and said, in her gentle voice:

"Do you recollect, at our rustic home at Karnak, on the left of the sheep-fold and fronting the pasture of the young heifers, a little hut covered with sea-weed, at the foot of a great oak?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Sylvest, surprised at this question, but letting his thoughts drift, despite himself, to his cherished recollections; "I built it for you."

"Yes; and when the summer sun was scorching, or the spring rains fell, we used to take shelter, you remember, in this hut."

"How pleasant it was there! with the great oak above our heads, the beautiful pasture-ground of the young heifers in front of us, and the beautiful brook, bordered with willows, where the newly-woven linen was spread, in the distance."

"Brother, do you remember, when we took refuge in this hut, how much we used to enjoy playing what we called games of words there?"

"Yes, yes, I remember."

"Do you remember the play called the game of conditions?"

"Yes."

"Well, brother, let us play it again as we used to do."

"What do you mean?"

She replied, with a charming grace: "First condition: little Sylvest, who sees Siomara through walls, is not to question his sister any more on the subject, or, in spite of her profound respect for her elder brother, she will be unable to help laughing at him. Second condition: little Sylvest is to answer all his sister's questions. These conditions fulfilled, he will learn all that he wishes to know, even concerning the transparent wall," added Siomara, with difficulty restraining a fresh impulse to laugh, "and he will have but one care, namely, how to express warmly enough his affection for his poor sister, whom he threatened just now never to see again—the naughty brother!"

Many years have passed since the day of this conversation, yet Sylvest, as he writes these lines, still fancies that he hears the voice of Siomara, in accents of innocent gayety, reminding her brother of these childish memories. He still seems to see her adorable face, with its expression at once so frank and so sincere. He therefore believed his sister's words, which confirmed him in the idea that there were mysteries in question which his reason could

not fathom. These mysteries, Siomara, according to her promise, would explain, and prove to her brother that she was not unworthy of his affection. He abandoned himself, therefore, to the sweet remembrance of the only years of happiness which he had ever known, and which he had shared with his sister in the bosom of their free and happy family. Drawing near Siomara, he took both her hands in his, and, endeavoring to smile like her at the memory of their childish plays, he said:

"Sylvest accepts little Siomara's conditions, and will ask no more questions. Let his sister interrogate him, and he will reply."

Siomara, tenderly pressing her brother's hands, said, in a touching and saddened voice, as if expecting a mournful answer, "Sylvest, what of our father?"

"He is dead; he was put to death by frightful tortures."

Large tears trickled down the cheeks of the courtesan. After a gloomy silence, she continued:

"Is it long since our father was thus cruelly put to death?"

"It was three years after he had been made a slave, like us, subsequent to the battle of Vannes."

"I remember our grief at being separated from each other, and at seeing my father, loaded with chains, make a superhuman effort to rush to our aid. But what became of you, my brother? You were not separated from him?"

"No; his master bought me likewise, for a trifle, I believe. Our father having shown himself of an indomitable race, it was feared that the wolf cub would grow up a wolf."

"And to what country were you both carried?"

"We remained in our own country, to cultivate the lands of our fathers, in chains, under the lash."

"What do you say?"

"Cæsar had distributed the lands among his wounded soldiers after the battle of Vannes; our house and part of our fields fell to the lot of our master."

"Poor father! poor brother! What must have been your grief at seeing our house and lands in the possession of strangers! But at least you were not separated from our father?"

"He slept at night with the other slaves in a vault dug for them,* while the Roman officer, his slave wives, and our overseers lodged in the house, where I lodged also, confined in a sort of cage."

"In a cage? And why this barbarity?"

"The day after we arrived, our master said to my father, pointing to me, 'Every day that I am not satisfied with your labor, one of your son's teeth will be drawn. Every time you rebel, one of his nails will be plucked out, and if you undertake to escape, at every attempt, either his foot, his hand, his nose, his ears, or his tongue will be cut off; if you succeed in escaping, his eyes will be torn out, after which he will either be put in the oven, smeared with honey, and thus exposed to the wasps, or burned at a slow fire in a robe coated with pitch.* You are free now to act in such a manner that your son will count his days by his tortures.'"

Siomara shuddered, and hid her face in her hands.

"'You will have no more docile or industrious slave than myself,' answered my father; 'only promise me that if you are satisfied with my conduct and my labor, I shall sometimes see my son.'

"'Behave yourself, and I will see about it,' returned the Roman.

"Our father kept his promise, thinking only of sparing me torture. He showed himself the most industrious and docile of slaves."

"He, the most docile of slaves!" exclaimed Siomara, her eyes wet with tears. "Our father—he who was so proud of the independence of our race—he, Guilhern, the son of Joel! Ah! never did a father give his child a greater proof of tenderness."

"A mother and father alone can have such courage. Nevertheless, despite his submission, it was long before our master permitted him to come near me; now and then I saw him at a distance, at morning or night, on his way to and from the ergastulum, for at these hours our master permitted me to leave the cage to take a little exercise, after chaining me to a great, ferocious dog, that never left my prison."

"O brother! were you treated thus?"

"Yes, I had on my neck a small iron collar and a chain long enough to be fastened to the collar of the dog. Our father derived such courage from the hope that he would some day be permitted to come near me, that at times he accomplished labors almost beyond human strength. The first time, for instance, that he was permitted to speak to me after our common enslavement, he owed the favor to having hoed up seven measures of land, beginning at sunrise and ending at sunset; while, when free and happy, in his full strength and health, he could not, perhaps, have accomplished the same task in two days of hard labor. That evening, our father, sun-burned, bathed in sweat, and breathless with fatigue, was brought by the overseer to my cage. For greater security, besides the chain that he

* The ergastulum, or prison of the farm-slaves, was always under ground.

* Among other tortures, slaves were dressed in robes smeared with pitch, and thus burned.

wore on his legs, his wrists had been handcuffed. The overseer did not take his eyes off us. O sister! I burst into tears at the sight of my father. Hitherto I had only seen him at a distance, but close by, dressed in rags, with his shaven head, and his hollow and emaciated face, I could scarcely recognize him."

"He, so handsome, proud and merry! Do you remember, Sylvest, how, on days of festivals and military drills, mounted on his iron-gray stallion with red housings and bridle, he rode at full gallop over our meadows, while our uncle Mikael, the armorer, followed him on foot, swinging now and then by the horse's mane."

"Yet, my sister, the first time that he was permitted to approach me and speak to me, our father's face became as radiant as at the time of our happiest days of old. Scarcely was he within reach of my cage when he exclaimed in a voice broken with tears of joy, 'Your cheek, my poor child, your cheek!' I laid my cheek against the grating and he tried to kiss it through the bars; then, in spite of our delight at seeing each other again, we wept profusely. He was the first to dry his tears, that he might comfort and encourage me, and remind me of the manly examples of our family and the precepts of our gods. We talked long of you, my sister. At last, after exchanging many loving words, the overseer led my father back to the vault. These interviews were rare, but every time they gave my father new courage."

"And you, poor brother, were you always kept imprisoned?"

"Always. It was our master's only guarantee for my father's docility. Three years passed in this manner. The Roman having occasion to correspond in our tongue with the Gauls of England concerning the sale of wheat, intrusted my father with this task; in this manner he was enabled, in obedience to the last wishes of our ancestor Joel, now and then to write by stealth for me some events of his life. He had hidden in a hollow tree, the location of which I knew, the narratives of Joel and Albinik, together with the little golden sickle of our aunt Hena, and one of the brass bells worn by our war-oxen at the battle of Vannes; he likewise deposited in the same spot what he had written. These pious relics of our family I have here, my sister; I brought them with me in order to prove to you, if necessary, that I was your brother. Alas! the last lines written by our father preceded his death but a few days—"

"And do you know the cause of this horrible death?"

"My father having rendered many services to our master, by degrees was allowed a little more liberty than the other slaves; he took advantage of this to prepare means for our flight. At our last interview, he said to me, 'If the place where you lodge should some night take fire, do not be afraid or seek to fly, but wait for me.' Do you remember, sister, the building where the flax was spread to dry?"

"Yes, the flax-house; it communicated with the stable where the oxen were kept. O Sylvest! how often we and our family have merrily passed the long winter evenings there in separating the skeins of flax! what joy presided over these labors! and our poor father was always the first to give the signal for gayety."

"Yes, he had at that time, like Joel, the gayety of good and brave hearts. I was shut up, therefore, as usual in the flax-house; my cage, built of thick oaken planks, was open on one side, which was secured with iron bars. I entered it by means of a door which was bolted on the outside by the Roman. One night, I was awakened by a thick smoke; then I perceived a bright light under the door which led to the stables, which suddenly opened and my father entered through a cloud of fire and smoke, with an axe in his hand and freed from his chains—how, I never knew. He ran to me, drew the bolts of my cage, told me to follow him, sprang to the other side of the flax-house, already attacked by the flames, with a blow of the axe made a hole through the mud wall, and put me through this opening, leaping after me."

"And you found yourself in the narrow circular walk, surrounded by a palisade, where the war-dogs were let loose at night?"

"Yes, but this palisade was too high for us to cross. My father attacked it with his axe, the light of the fire shining full upon us meanwhile. At length it yielded. There was behind it, as you remember, a broad, deep ditch."

"How did you cross it? It was impossible."

"The ditch was twice my father's height. He leaped into it, opened his arms, and told me to follow his example. I became confused and jumped too far. My father with difficulty broke my fall, in which I sprained my ankle. The pain drew from me a piercing cry, which my father stifled by putting his hand over my mouth. I lost consciousness. When I regained my senses, which, doubtless, was long afterward, the following spectacle met my eyes. Do you remember that not far from the spring of the washhouse, there were two old willows, one of which was hollow?"

"Yes; we fastened a rope between them for a swing."

"In the hollow of one of them were hidden our family relics. These trees, which had formerly witnessed our childish sports, were destined to witness the torture of my-

self and my father. After fainting at the bottom of the ditch, I was brought to my senses by an extraordinary pain, resembling an infinite number of sharp pricks all over my body. I opened my eyes, but the scorching sun, darting on my shaven head, at first obliged me to cast them down. I felt myself standing, bound naked to one of the willows. I opened my eyes anew; opposite me, also bound naked to the other tree, I saw my father. His body, which had been smeared with honey like my own, was almost entirely covered with a swarm of large red ants, which had their hills among the roots of the two willows. I then understood the meaning of the thousands of bites that I felt. The ants had not yet attacked my face; but I already felt them crawling on my neck. My first cry was for my father; I then perceived that by turns he burst into a frightful laugh, uttered incoherent words, and shrieked with anguish; the ants were doubtless beginning to penetrate the brain through the ears and to attack his eyes, for his closed eyelids were covered with insects."*

"This atrocious suffering, and, above all, the burning sun darting long on his bare and shaven head, had driven him mad. I cried, 'Father, help!' He no longer heard me. My cries attracted the notice of another Roman colonist, a neighbor of our master, who was reputed to be humane toward his slaves, and who chanced to be walking in that direction. He rushed to me, and, moved by pity, cut my bonds, dragged me to the spring of the washhouse, and plunged me into the water to rid me of the ants. My first sufferings appeased, I entreated the Roman to go to my father's assistance. At that moment one of the overseers came up, followed by our master. He consented, through cupidity, to sell me to the other colonist, but he declared in his fury that my father, having burned part of the farm-buildings the night before, in order to take advantage of the confusion to escape, should endure his torture to the end—and he did so. Carried thence by the Roman, I was ill for a long time, but was treated with humanity; some Romans are not the tormentors of their slaves. The first time that I was able to go out alone, I revisited the willows; I found there the bleached bones of our father."

"To die thus, O God!" exclaimed Siomara, wiping away her tears; "to die a slave, in frightful tortures, in the very place where he and his friends had so long lived free and happy!"

"Like you, Siomara, I was frantic with grief at the thought; young as I was, I swore an oath of vengeance over our father's sacred remains. I then took the family narratives from the hollow willow where they were concealed. I remained for some years with my master as a house-slave. At this epoch I learned the Roman language. Unhappily, my master died. I was put up at auction, with the other slaves, and was bought by a Roman procurator, who was making a tour through our country. He was violent and cruel, and made my life more wretched than ever; then he rid himself of me, and I passed from hand to hand, till I was sold to Lord Diabolus, one of the worst masters I ever had, and in whose service I now am. A last word, my sister: almost two years ago, having accompanied Diabolus to a villa adjoining that of a noble Roman lady, whose steward employs many slaves in her factories, I met a young woman, a Gaul from Paris, who had been sold after the siege of that city; we fell in love, and one night, in the presence of the sacred star of Gaul, we pledged each other our faith, the only marriage permitted to slaves in their misfortunes. The gods have blessed our love, for Loyse, my wife, has hopes of being a mother. Yesterday, having learned by chance that the beautiful Gaul who had lately arrived at Orange was you, my sister, I pretended to flatter my master's profligacy in order to find means of gaining access to you. During the night that has just passed, I have been the witness of frightful mysteries which for a moment unsettled my reason. Yes, for a moment, I was the sport of visions or sorceries. Your spectre appeared, and froze me with horror. You have laughed at my wild fears, and have said to me, 'Brother, first answer my questions; then what now seems inexplicable to you will appear natural, and you will acknowledge that your sister Siomara has never been unworthy of your affection.' My sister, in the name of the childish memories which have moved you so deeply, in the name of our father whom you have just wept, fulfill your promise. Believe that I pardon and pity the shame in which you live, and into which you have fallen in spite of yourself. Alas! what else could have been your fate, bought in infancy as you were by Trymalcion, that monster of licentiousness and cruelty."

"He!" replied Siomara, with a sweet smile, "no, indeed, Trymalcion was not a monster."

"What do you say?—that horrible old man!"

"Oh! he was horribly ugly, it is true;

* This frightful torture of being given up as a prey to the ants is thus described by Apuleius, in the *Metamorphosis*, Book VIII.: "He ordered him to be smeared with honey from head to foot, and bound to a hollow oak, which served as the dwelling of swarms of ants; no sooner had the insects perceived the fragrant odor of honey exhaling from his body, than they covered him with innumerable bites; they thus put him to death by slow torture, devouring his flesh and entrails till the unfortunate man became a fleshless corpse, and naught remained but a skeleton bound to a tree."

he even inspired me at first with great terror, which lasted for some days. And then," she added, ingenuously, "my feelings toward him became quite different."

"What do I hear? You, my sister, can you speak thus?"

"Would you wish to see me ungrateful?"

"Great gods, what does she say?"

"You, poor brother," resumed Siomara, redoubling her caressing tenderness, "you, subjected from childhood to harsh slavery, with the spectacle of our father's wretchedness and suffering constantly before your eyes, must view servitude with hatred and abhorrence; it is quite natural; and then you compare with your present life the peaceful days of our childhood passed in our humble home. But how different it has been with me, Sylvest!"

"What? Do you speak in this way of slavery?"

"I a slave!" And she burst into a fit of laughter so sincere that Sylvest stood appalled. "Know then that, on the contrary, before a week had passed, I, a child eight years old, had for my chief slave old Lord Trymalcion; his slaves were also mine, for I know not what charm had rendered this old man, so dreaded by all, a veritable lamb to me. Then you cannot imagine the marvels of his galley which took me from Vannes to Italy. The galley of Queen Cleopatra was nothing compared to it. Fancy that my cabin, the most sumptuous of all, for Trymalcion had had it before giving it to me, was wainscotted with ivory inlaid with gold, and the ceilings were covered with charming pictures, which at first astonished me greatly. The carpet was composed of the plumage of the rarest birds, and equaled the rainbow in the variety and brilliancy of its colors. My bedstead and all the furniture of my room, carved by the Greeks, were of the finest gold; the beds, covered with Tyrian silk, were filled with the down of young swans, and such was the fineness and whiteness of the linen sheets that a spider's web would have seemed coarse and the snow gray compared with them. Half a score of female slaves, whose whole occupation it was to serve me, were employed night and day in making me dresses of the richest and most priceless Eastern stuffs, and daily presented new robes to my enchanted eyes. Necklaces, bracelets, and jewels of all sorts, sparkling with precious stones, filled my caskets; exquisite dishes and costly wines covered my table, and old Lord Trymalcion amused himself by officiating as my cup-bearer. If I wished to play, Persian dogs no larger than my hand, apes dressed in grotesque fashions, and little Moorish girls of my own age, were brought me for dolls; or red and blue parroquets, trained to say Siomara, in silver cages with golden bars. When I was tired of these amusements, the old lord gave me onyx boxes full of pearls and precious stones, which I was very fond of throwing into the sea; this diversion alone probably cost Lord Trymalcion ten thousand aurei. On our arrival in Italy, the munificence that awaited me almost made me smile at my simplicity in being dazzled by the splendor of the galley."

Sylvest had not the courage to interrupt his sister. Never before had he thought of this monstrous phase of slavery, these infamous seductions, more terrible to a proud and upright soul than the hardest toil and the cruelest tortures, which break down and kill the body alone.

"What!" said he to Siomara, with his eyes filled with tears of pity, "what! unhappy child, at this tender age, not a regret for your father, mother and kindred; not a regret for the innocent life of your earliest years!"

"Oh! yes, I wept bitterly at first for you, and for my mother and father; but we cannot weep always; our tears at last dry up, and childhood is so fickle! Then, brother, I could not in sincerity long regret my coarse woolen dresses, thick leather shoes, and linen caps, and our games with pebbles on the beach, when reigning absolutely on the galley of Lord Trymalcion, dressed like an empress's daughter, and amusing myself by throwing pearls and rubies into the sea."

"Merciful gods," exclaimed Sylvest, "I bless you for having made slavery so cruel to me, and putting on my neck an iron instead of a golden collar; otherwise I should have doubtless worn this yoke of infamy with joy, like my unhappy sister. So, opulence, idleness and pleasures make amends for everything. Family, modesty, country, liberty, the gods, exist no longer in your sight!"

"What do you mean, Sylvest?" returned Siomara, half extending her arms, as if a remembrance of weariness and satiety weighed upon her again for a moment. "At fourteen, I had long been the queen of those gigantic bacchanalian feasts that old Trymalcion gave every month for my amusement in his vast subterranean villa on the island of Caprea, where, by a strange fancy of this noble lord, ten thousand torches of perfumed wax replaced the light of day. Provinces might have been bought with the gold expended on each of these saturnalia, in which young and beautiful slaves were drowned in porphyry basins filled with the rarest wine, and children and young virgins were stifled under mountains of rose-leaves, mixed with jessamine and orange blossoms, to say nothing of a thousand other capricious inventions of Trymalcion, who thought only of contriving how to please me or to dispel my increasing ennui. O Sylvest! the orgies of Faustina are talked of in Orange; they are the innocent sports of

children compared with the subterranean, nocturnal orgies of this old lord, who prolonged his days to the age of ninety-eight, by taking a magic bath every morning, composed of the warm blood of a young girl.* The old man died, opportunely for himself and others. He had exhausted his inventions for combating the disgust and satiety which were undermining me daily. Happily—and I can tell you this, now that your story and your tenderness for me prove to me that I have found a brother, from whom I will never more be separated—happily, for the last two years, I have found a remedy for this weariness, satiety and disgust of everything. O brother!" added Siomara, with an enthusiasm that lighted up her whole face, "if you knew the keen and terrible pleasure that is found in certain mysteries! If you knew—but what is the matter? You turn pale and seem struck with terror. Sylvest, what is the matter? Answer me."

Siomara spoke truly. Her brother turned pale, and his face expressed abhorrence and terror; for, in making these abominable revelations, his sister's countenance had remained indifferent and almost smiling; her calm, sweet voice became animated only in speaking of the keen and terrible pleasure which she found in certain mysteries. At these words, his doubts again became more poignant than ever. Remembering the vision of the night before, he shuddered with horror, and abruptly recoiled from his sister, whose arm till then had rested on his shoulder; then, raising his clasped hands toward heaven, he cried, as if unable to believe what he saw and heard:

"O all-powerful gods! this unhappy girl was moved a moment since by the memories of our childhood. She wept at the story of my father's and my own tortures. Compassionate gods! is this again a vision? Is this again a phantom in my sister's shape?"

Siomara looked in turn at Sylvest with surprise, and made a movement to approach him, but he stopped her by a gesture of horror. She fixed her large eyes on him, and said, in her sweet and tender voice:

"Poor brother! what is the matter with you? Whence comes this anxiety? You saw me weep with emotion, you say, at the memory of our childhood, and at the story of the wretchedness and torture of our father and yourself—"

"Yes; and at the sight of these tears, my last suspicions vanished."

"What suspicions?"

"Have I not told you my horrible vision of last night?"

Siomara remained for a moment silent and thoughful; then, addressing the slave, without blushing or being embarrassed, she said in a low, confidential tone, "Brother, I can now confess to you that it was not a vision, but myself, that you saw last night."

At this revelation, Sylvest sprang to the door, and perceived for the first time that it was closed. He was unable to open it, though he redoubled his efforts on hearing Siomara repeat, "No, it was not a vision; the Siomara of last night, Siomara the magician, was your sister. Be not so faint-hearted," she added in a tone of gentle reproach.

"Compassionate gods," he cried, with joy, struck by a sudden thought, "you have made her mad. Oh! now you no longer inspire me with abhorrence, unfortunate girl," he added, unable to restrain his sobs, and, approaching his sister, "I pity you, my heart is rent with anguish on seeing you, so young and beautiful, bereft of your reason. Yes, my heart is breaking, but it is no longer filled with indignation at the sight of a monster, poor lunatic!"

"I a lunatic, because my tears flowed at your stories? Is it this that surprises you? I was surprised at it myself, I confess. But these tears were sincere; why should I have feigned them? What would have been the use of it, when I was about to make this revelation to you and tell you that I was the magician of last night?"

"Yes, it was you, poor creature!" replied Sylvest, in the indulgent tone that is employed toward lunatics in order not to irritate them, "yes, it was you."

"Brother, you talk of weakness of mind. It is yours that is weak; you insist on denying what you do not understand. Last night, through the treachery of the eunuch, you saw me transform myself from a young and beautiful woman into a horrible old hag. Did you understand this transformation any better than the tears which I shed just now? Yet it was as real as the tears which you saw, and which seem to you inexplicable."

At the recollection of this sorcery, of which he had been a witness, Sylvest became troubled anew. Whether mad or not, his sister was a sorceress—one of those monsters abhorred of nature, men, and the gods. He determined on a last and terrible test, and, repressing his emotion, said:

"Poor madwoman! if you are really a magician, tell me what you did and where you went the night before last?"

"I was at Faustina's, in the temple on the canal."

"How were you dressed?"

"As you saw me last night when I went out to perform my enchantments."

"No, no!" exclaimed Sylvest, bewildered on seeing his last hope escape him; "no, it was not you, for this magician predicted to Faustina that Siomara would be her victim.

* See Pliny, the naturalist, *De Nat.*, Book II.

Would you have made this prediction against yourself?"

"Who told you of this?"

"O horrible prediction! deciphered by you or your spectre from the white traces left on the purple carpet by the convulsed fingers of the poisoned slave."

"Once more, who told you of this?"

"Compassionate gods, have pity on me!"

"Since you know all, brother, learn that in order to deceive Faustina, whom I hate and have long hated—for this hatred dates three years back, when we were both at Naples—I wished last night to give Faustina a false hope, the disappointment of which will deal her a terrible blow. By means of sorcery, therefore, I assumed the features of the Thessalian magician for whom she had sent, which I assumed again last night in your presence on leaving the house to work other magic charms."

"You confess it; it was you who caused that child of sixteen to die a frightful death in order to deceive Faustina?"

"Yes," replied Siomara, with an inspired air, "yes, that child died through my enchantments. What her death-struggle revealed to me, Faustina, deceived by my false words, knows not, while I read mysterious things therein that unfold the future before my eyes. Yes, that slave died, as others have died and will yet die. The agonies of the dying reveal to us terrible secrets, which are sure of accomplishment; death has treasures for him who knows how to find them. For this reason, I am a seeker," she added, with a more and more abstracted and inspired air; "I interrogate everything, for everything possesses a magic power. The flower growing in the crevices of the tomb, the blood congealed in the veins of the young virgin, the direction which the wind gives the flame of the funeral-torch, the bubbling of metals in fusion, the smile of the infant as he plays with the knife that is about to take his life, the sardonic laugh of the malefactor on the cross—I interrogate everything; I seek, I have found, and I shall find still more."

"What do you seek?" cried Sylvest, bewildered. "What have you found?"

"The unknown, the magic power of living at once in the past and the future, and of subjecting the present to my will; the power of cleaving the air like a bird and the water like a fish; the power of transforming leaves into precious stones and sand into fine gold; the power of eternally prolonging my youth and beauty; the power of assuming whatever shape I will; oh! to become at my will a wood-flower, to feel my calyx bathed with the dew of the night, and to tremble under the kisses of the little nocturnal genii, the lovers of flowers; to become a lioness in the desert, to attract the huge lions by my roaring; a silver-spotted adder, to twine with the black serpents under the blue lotuses that border the sleeping waters; or a turtle-dove, with a rainbow neck and red beak, to nestle in the moss with the cherished birds of Venus; to equal the gods in omnipotence, and have power to say, I will, and it is done! Therefore, I seek; I seek, and I shall find. Nothing, nothing shall stop me. O brother! if you knew the anguish and terrors of these researches by means of sorcery—the strange and unequaled pleasures! Last night, from the moment when, transformed into a Thessalian magician, I succeeded, by innumerable enchantments, in deluding and lulling to sleep the watchers at the tomb of Lydia, to the hour when, in the silence and darkness of the sepulchre, I succeeded in gaining possession of the body of the young virgin wherewith to work my magic charms, I experienced such fears, tremors, and ecstasy as no human tongue ever could or ever can describe."

"The wrath of heaven!" exclaimed Sylvest. "I abhor thee, Siomara, but I curse the slavery which has made thee what thou art. Thou, the innocent child of my mother, carried off in thy infancy by a demon who corrupted, depraved, and ruined thee, hast gone on from one kind of debauchery to another, till, satiated at fourteen by the abominations of Trymalcion, thou hast come to the point of seeking the unknown and the impossible in murder, the profanation of tombs, and the frightful mysteries of sacrilegious magic! Oh! by my father, who died in tortures; by my sister, who has become the terror of nature and the gods, curses on slavery! Implacable hatred and ferocious vengeance on those who make slaves!"

"Yes, hatred, execration, vengeance, brother! they kill, and the dead serve for sorceries. Listen: it is said by the Egyptians that there are enchantments which are powerful and infallible if wrought by a son and daughter of the same father, who have both sacrificed in the secret ceremonies of the goddess Isis. Do this, brother; I will initiate you, and ransom you from your master."

Sylvest was about to reject this offer with indignation, when the conversation was interrupted by the voice of the eunuch, who cried, as he knocked at the door:

"Open the door, Siomara; the sun has risen. A magistrate is here with a band of soldiers, in search of a slave who has fled from the house of Lord Diabolus with a casket of gold. Open the door."

"I will inquire the way to your master's house," said Siomara. "We will never again be separated, good and loving brother. I will buy you, at whatever price. Diabolus is enamored of the beautiful Gaul—what can he refuse her?"

Never could Sylvest have imagined such shame—to be redeemed at the price of his sister's infamy. To escape this last blow, he said to Siomara, while the eunuch still thundered at the door:

"Brought up as I have been in the faith of our fathers, magic seems terrible to me. Nevertheless, I may assist you perhaps in your sorceries if you will promise to give me the means, through your magic art, of taking dire vengeance on my master and his fellows."

"Brother, we will never more quit each other, and you shall have the choice of my most atrocious sorceries."

"To satisfy my hatred, I must remain a few days longer in the service of Diabolus. I have my plans. Swear to me, by the love we bear each other, to take no step with my master toward procuring my liberty till I see you again, which I shall easily find means to do soon. Do you promise?"

"I swear it," replied Siomara, radiant with delight, clasping her brother in a tender last embrace, which he dared not repulse for fear of awakening her suspicions. She then approached the door, and, doubtless, touched a hidden spring, for it instantly flew open. Before Sylvest had time to turn round, his sister had disappeared, either by an invisible outlet or a new enchantment.

"Here is the wretched slave!" exclaimed the eunuch, entering with the magistrate, and appearing to triumph with cruel joy over Sylvest's expulsion from the house. "The beautiful Gaul," he added, "ignorant that this hang-dog had stolen a casket, which no one here has seen, was weak enough to believe the lamentable story of the rascal, who called himself her fellow-countryman in order to beg alms of her. Begone, gallows-bird! Luckily, Lord Diabolus will settle accounts with you."

Sylvest quitted Siomara's house under the charge of the magistrate and the soldiers. He found his master waiting outside. Diabolus instantly entreated the magistrate to bind the slave's hands and permit two soldiers to escort him home, for fear that he might escape. Sylvest's secret desire was on the way to accomplishment. He was conducted to the house of Diabolus, who walked by his side without speaking a word. The silent rage of the Roman was more dreaded by his slaves than his gusts of passion. On reaching home, he told the two soldiers to wait in the vestibule; he then made Sylvest enter a low chamber and shut himself in with him.

Diabolus was pale with anger; and his hands seemed, despite himself, to clench from time to time with rage. With knit brows, angry eyes and close-shut teeth, he gazed at his slave in gloomy silence. At last, after having sufficiently enjoyed and relished his vengeance in advance, he said to Sylvest, whose hands were still bound:

"I waited for you all night at the door of the beautiful Gaul; yes *I* waited for *you* all night. What were you doing in her house, while your master was dancing attendance outside?"

"I was talking of you, my lord."

"Really, you honest servant! And what did you say?"

"I said, my lord, that, overburdened with debt, and shrinking from no base rascality or disgraceful act, you had sent her as a present a casket of gold, which you had all but stolen from one of your friends, a rich young simpleton. 'Now, in my opinion,' I said to the beautiful Gaul, 'you cannot make a more profitable choice than to take this young simpleton and his gold. As to my master, Lord Diabolus, take my advice and shut the door in his face; this noble scoundrel will ruin you: witness the noble lady Fulvia, the flute-player Bassa, and all the other poor fools whom he has reduced to poverty.' The beautiful Gaul listened to my brotherly counsels, as you may assure yourself by knocking at her door. Do not think that I am jesting, my lord; no, this time I am not playing on your stupid credulity, as I have so often done. I have said sincerely what I think of you, despicable lord, master more infamous than the vilest of the vile!"

Diabolus, although accustomed to the saucy repartees of his slave, did not at first reply, doubtless thinking that after this insolence, meant as irony, Sylvest would seek to excuse his fault. The last words of his valet, however, undeceived him; unable to restrain his rage, he seized a stool, ornamented with bronze figures, and springing forward, raised it with both hands to dash out the brains of the slave, who passively and joyfully awaited death. Thinking better of it, however, he checked himself and exclaimed, while still brandishing the stool: "No, I will not kill you; you would not suffer enough."

Sylvest mournfully saw his last hope fail; but he was not yet discouraged. His hands were bound, but his legs were free; he took advantage of this liberty to give Diabolus such a furious kick in the stomach that he rolled several paces off, crying, "Help! Murder!"

"Now," thought Sylvest, "he cannot fail to kill me. I shall not owe my liberty to the infamy of Siomara, and I shall be safe from her sorceries, which would unceasingly pursue me, and to which I should finally fall a victim."

At the cries of Diabolus, the two soldiers and several slaves, among whom was the cook, Fourspices, rushed into the room, while their master rose painfully, his face convulsed with pain and rage. He sank

breathless into a chair, saying to the soldiers, "Seize that wretch. He tried to kill me."

The soldiers laid hold of Sylvest, while his companions in slavery, by whom he was beloved, exchanged gloomy looks in silence and consternation. Diabolus, by this time feeling his pain a little abated, rose, and, leaning against a table, after mature reflection, said to the soldiers, in a calm voice:

"Carry this murderer to the vaults of the amphitheatre. In three days, the games will take place; in three days, he will be thrown to the wild beasts."

"At last," thought Sylvest. "My hour will soon come."

His companions shuddered with terror as the two soldiers dragged him away. Fourspices secretly made a sign with his thumb and finger, as if taking a pinch of snuff, to Sylvest, who understood that the cook had not abandoned his plan of poisoning.

Before continuing this painful story, my child, I wish to tell thee why the noble Faustina should inspire thee with no pity, while Siomara, however criminal and monstrous she may seem, has a right perhaps to some commiseration.

Faustina was the personification of that savage contempt for human beings that is born of the unlimited power which the master arrogates to himself over the slave, the conqueror over the conquered, and the oppressor over the oppressed. Faustina was a most terrible example of those excesses which arise almost necessarily from idleness, opulence, unrestrained will and uncurbed desires, and are soon followed by satiety, which then begets refinements of barbarity and debauchery at which nature shudders.

Siomara was the personification of the terrible depravity into which we are almost necessarily plunged by slavery when we are held in it from infancy, and especially when, instead of being treated with harshness and cruelty, our bodies are rendered effeminate by all the enjoyments of luxury and our souls are poisoned by a precocious corruption. The slave who is doomed to the rudest toil, and is beaten and tortured, unceasingly recruits his energy by grief and hatred; the feeling of dignity is not extinguished in him, for he dreams of rebellion; but this abhorrence of oppression, the sole virtue of slavery, is lost by the slave who is weakened and enervated by abominable pleasures, and who often equals, and even exceeds, his masters in crime.

Siomara, bought in her childhood and brought up by an infamous old man, whose monstrosity seemed to exceed the limits of possibility, undertook to imitate Trymalcion, and surpassed him. Shame and misfortune to our race! Yet the slave Siomara had not the choice between good and evil, while the noble Faustina, free and rich, could choose between the two. The one became a monster by condition, the other by nature.

CHAPTER V.

Sylvest is taken to the vaults of the amphitheatre of Orange.—Paternal advice of the turnkey and keepers as to the best mode of encountering lions, tigers, elephants, and crocodiles.—Advent of the festival.—The gladiators on horseback and on foot.—The Mercuries.—The Plutos.—The drinkers of blood.—The female gladiators.—Faustina and Siomara.—Mount Libanus and Bibrix.—Diabolus and his friends.—The slaves thrown to the wild beasts.—Dying songs of the Children of the Mistletoe.—The temple of the Canal.—The flight.

SYLVEST, having been led to the amphitheatre by the soldiers, was loaded with chains and shut up alone in an underground cell: the slaves destined to the wild beasts were imprisoned separately, for fear that they would strangle each other to escape a horrible and prolonged death. From his dungeon he heard the roars of the animals to which he was to be given as a prey on the third evening after his imprisonment, the combats of the gladiators and the wild beasts taking place by torchlight. Such had been the trouble of Sylvest's mind at the close of the night that he had spent in the house of Siomara, especially when the latter had offered to initiate him into her sorceries, that, forgetting Loyse, he had sought, by insulting and striking his master, that death which he could not inflict on himself, having been bound from the moment of his arrest at the courtesan's. His mind regaining its strength in the solitude of his cell, he thought of his wife and took farewell of her in thought, reflecting, not without regret (he acknowledges this weakness), that on the very evening that he was to be thrown to the wild beasts, Loyse would be waiting for him, at all hazards, in the park of Faustina, as had been agreed at their last interview. He also regretted not having accepted Loyse's offer a month before, when she proposed to him to flee.

To certain slaves employed in the household, in the factory, or in agriculture, flight was sometimes possible; but they were forced to take refuge in deep solitudes, far from all inhabited places, where they often died of hunger. He had been unwilling to expose his wife, in her situation, to such a death; but now, when his only hope was to be killed at the first bite of a lion or tiger of the amphitheatre, and thus to escape prolonged agony, he regretted not having braved the terrible risks of an escape with Loyse. Had it not been for the remembrance of his wife, the slave would have awaited the day of his death with indifference; subjugated Gaul might not, perchance, break her chains as soon as she

hoped, by the rebellion of the Children of the Mistletoe, and he would go to rejoin his ancestors in unknown worlds.

Nevertheless, one fear at times caused Sylvest to shudder and gaze with anguish at the thick walls and stone flags of his dungeon. Siomara was a magician; he dreaded every instant to see her appear, and to be carried off by her through her enchantments. Lastly, another trouble weighed on Sylvest's heart. As usual, he carried in the thick, strong belt of his braga the little golden sickle and the brass bell of Hena and his father Guilhern, as well as the small rolls of tanned skin containing the family history. On seeing himself destined to an inevitable death, he thought with sadness that these pious relics would soon be scattered over the bloody sand of the arena, instead of being transmitted to his posterity, according to the hope of his ancestor Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak.

The turnkey, who brought Sylvest his pittance once a day, was an invalid soldier—an old Cretan archer—and as chattering as a Gaul, the good Joel would have said. This turnkey, who had long been an attendant at the games of the amphitheatre, and was hardened to the sight, always entertained Sylvest during his meals—and this not from any evil intention—with the number and ferocity of the animals of which his friend and companion, the chief keeper, had the charge. On the night before the bloody festival, he said to the slave in a paternal tone:

"Ah, my son, a superb pair of African lions have just arrived, in the nick of time, for to-morrow. I thought of you; for my friend, the chief keeper, says that he has never seen more ferocious beasts. Four leagues from here, while at rest and after having had their fill of meat, through pure malice they tore their Arab keeper to pieces, to whom they had been long accustomed, and who stood in no fear of them. What will it be to-morrow evening, when they have been without food for a whole day? I hope, therefore, my son, that you will fall under the paw of one of these fellows; he will not make you suffer long. And, above all, I entreat you—for your youth interests me—above all, remember this: do not act like those ill-judged men who, when once the beasts are let loose in the amphitheatre, foolishly throw themselves down with their faces to the ground, and offer their backs to the animals. The fools! their agony and torture last a hundred times longer, as you can well understand. None of the vital parts of the body being touched at first, the death is much slower; while, on the contrary, it is soon over—do not forget this, my son—by kneeling face to face with the lion or tiger, with your throat and breast within easy reach of his teeth; you have a good chance, at least, of being strangled or ripped up at the first blow."

"The advice is good; I will follow it."

"But remember, my son, that to kneel thus face to face with the animal, is only suited to an encounter with lions or tigers. If you have an elephant to deal with, it is quite different."

"Will there be elephants, then, at the festival? I did not suppose that there were any of these animals in Orange."

"The ediles, wishing to render to-morrow's spectacle unparalleled in Roman Gaul, have been to great expense; they have purchased the fighting elephant of the Nîmes amphitheatre, which is said to be ferocious, and which arrived a few days since. And that is not all, for, by Jupiter! our venerable ediles do things royally; there will be an extraordinary combat, such as I, even, have never seen but twice in my life—once at Rome, and once at Alexandria in Egypt."

"What is this extraordinary combat?"

"Before telling you about it, my son, let me give you a piece of advice. As to the elephant, when you see him rushing furiously toward you, try not to let him wind his trunk about you, but throw yourself flat on your belly and cling to one of his hind-legs. He will stamp to rid himself of your grasp, and in an instant he will have broken your bones and crushed you as flat as you would crush a snail under your boot."

"I will endeavor, therefore, to address myself to the elephant in preference; with him, there is more chance of dying quickly."

"Yes, but you must be nimble and agile to reach the elephant first; he will be greatly sought after, and all the slaves condemned to the beasts will rush toward him the moment he enters the arena."*

"And does this extraordinary combat of which you speak offer a chance of a more speedy death?"

"No, no, by Hercules! I hope that you will not have to brave those monstrous animals. At Rome, I saw three slaves have their thighs and arms taken off in an instant by the saw-teeth of the crocodile, as neatly as if by an axe."

"I see; this Roman festival will be complete—bears, tigers, lions, elephants, and sea-monsters. Will there be slaves enough to regale all these guests?"

"Without counting those whom their masters no doubt will generously offer between this time and to-morrow's spectacle, there are forty-eight of you already; that is quite sufficient."

"Yes, there will be wherewith to divert those who are dull for lack of amusement.

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* Pliny, the naturalist, gives these curious details concerning the elephant fights, and describes a combat with a crocodile and a hippopotamus that were brought into the arena.

But this crocodile cannot fight on the sand of the amphitheatre?"

"No; a tank has therefore been built for him in the middle of the arena, on a level with the floor, so that the slaves, in flying hither and thither to escape the wild beasts, cannot fail to fall into it. This tank will be a hundred paces in circumference and two cubits in depth. The crocodile comes from Rome by sea, in a galley fitted up expressly for him."

"Like a proconsul, or a rich nobleman?"

"Yes, my son. And, hold! what interests me most of all in you is the firm courage which you display. Of what country are you?"

"I was born in Breton Gaul."

"By the valiant god Mars! those Bretons dealt rude thrusts. I know them of old. I lost my arm by the blow of an axe, under the eyes of the great Cæsar, at the battle of Vannes—a terrible combat, in which Cæsar himself was well-nigh made a prisoner."

"Yes; my father carried him off, armed, on his horse."

"That is true; I was there when the Numidian cavaliers ran to the aid of Cæsar, whom a kind of Gallic giant was carrying off. What! was that Breton your father?"

"Yes; he was the only one of our family that survived the battle of Vannes. But," resumed Sylvest, fearing that the Roman might suppose that he wished to excite his pity by speaking of Gallic bravery, "we are wandering from the crocodile who came from Rome in his galley, like a proconsul or a rich nobleman. Where did he land?"

"At Narbonne, whence he was brought here in a huge vat filled with water and drawn by twenty teams of oxen. This morning, a live heifer was given to the monster; my son, he crushed its bones as easily as a cat would a mouse."

"The slaves who are given to it, however, it seems to me, can drown themselves before being devoured. That is a good chance."

"No, they cannot drown themselves; that has been provided for. The tank of the amphitheatre will be filled a cubit's depth with earth, with a little water on the top, so that the head and shoulders of the slave will be above the surface. As to the manner of encountering the crocodile, I can give you no advice, having no experience on the subject. Besides, as the slaves are not given to the beasts like the last, while awaiting your turn, you will witness one of the greatest gladiatorial combats that ever was seen—eight couples on horseback and twenty-five on foot; and it is even said, though this is not yet certain, that, to complete the festival several of our great ladies will fight together according to the new Roman fashion."*

"Women, noble women?"

"Certainly, and the noblest. The keeper who brought the crocodile from Italy told us that he had sometimes seen in the amphitheatre at Rome five couples of women, the wives of senators and patricians, fight either together or with female slaves, with incredible fury; just as the nobles and knights often fight like gladiators with the slaves, who are unarmed, of course—slaves are only armed when they fight with each other to the death, like the professional gladiators, such as Mount Libanus of this province and other swordsmen. Oh! the evening will be magnificent. Then, thanks to the new remedy of the doctors," added the turnkey, laughing, "the servants of the amphitheatre, and I am of the number, will make a good day of it to-morrow?"

"In what manner?"

"Are you ignorant of the wonderful effects in the cure of certain diseases that are now wrought with the livers of gladiators just killed? The doctors will be at hand, ready to pounce, like a cloud of vultures, on the warm bodies of the gladiators; for the liver must be taken from the palpitating entrails to preserve all its virtue; and the sale of the livers, to say nothing of the liberal gifts of the old men and epileptics, who also come hither to seek life in death (you will see how), constitute our small profits. But, by Pluto! all is not pleasure to us; for the festival once ended, the torches extinguished, and the arena deserted and as black as night, oh! my son—"

"Why do you shudder in this manner; what takes place when the arena is dark and deserted?"

"Then comes the hour for the sorceresses."

"The sorceresses!" said Sylvest, shuddering, in turn. "Wherefore do they come to the amphitheatre at that hour of the night?"

"That is the hour when, taking the form of hyenas, wolves, adders, birds of prey, or unknown animals, still more horrible, the magicians glide through the darkness and dispute with each other the human remains with which the bloody sand of the arena is strewn. Ah! how often, an old soldier though I am, I have trembled in my lodge on hearing afar off the frightful howls of the sorceresses, as they snatched from each other shreds of half-devoured flesh, and

* "The gladiatorial spectacles that year were as magnificent as those of the year before," says Tacitus in his *Annals*; 'but too many illustrious women and senators degraded themselves by appearing in the arena." "Not only men, but women also fought," says Suetonius: *Domitian*, chap. iv.

heads torn from their trunks and lacerated by the claws and teeth of the wild beasts! O my son! big drops of sweat stand on my brow at the thought of the mysterious and horrible sounds that I shall hear to-morrow night after the festival."

The turnkey left Sylvest a prey to new anguish. Perchance, Siomara would come the next night in the form of a wolf to dispute the remains of her brother with the other magicians. He passed his last night in prison almost without sleep, fearing constantly to see Siomara. Thank the gods! she did not appear; doubtless, faithful to her promise not to address Diabolus for the purpose of buying the liberty of Sylvest at the price of infamy before seeing her brother again, she was waiting for him, ignorant that he was condemned to die in the arena.

The evening of the festival arrived. Two hours before, the old Cretan invalid, instead of bringing Sylvest his usual pittance, said to him, "My son, to-day you have a free meal."*

"What is that?"

"You can call for whatever you like to eat, to the value of half an aureus. The eighty slaves who are destined like you to the beasts have the same liberty with respect to their last meal. It is an ancient and generous custom."

"Yes, the ediles are doubtless anxious that the lions, tigers and crocodiles should be regaled on slaves delicately fed. For my part, I shall not give these noble animals such a treat; I shall eat nothing to-day; they must take me such as the prison diet has made me."

"This is very singular," replied the turnkey, looking thoughtfully at Sylvest. "There are some thirty of you Gallic slaves here, who are condemned to the wild beasts, and you are as firm as a rock, while the other slaves, Romans, Spaniards, Germans, Arabs, and Hebrews, are all—no, not all, the Hebrew slaves also show great courage, caring little for death, and saying that their Messiah will come some day—"

"Who is their Messiah?"

"I know nothing about it, my son. A man, they say, who, more fortunate than the other Messiahs that have appeared of late, will free their people from the yoke of the Romans, for the Romans rule the country of the Hebrews like all the rest of the world. But, in short, these Hebrews are also firm before the prospect of death, while all the rest, except you Gauls, have seen this evening draw nigh with increasing terror or frenzied despair; you, on the contrary, do not look troubled, and some among you even smile. By Hercules! my son, whence comes this?"

"The reason is that our gods and their Druids have taught us that we never die."

"Still jesting, my son! What! when, in a few hours, your bones will be crushed by the teeth of wild beasts and your body will be torn in pieces, you will not die?"

"Does the body die because the garments that cover it wear out and are replaced by new? No, the garments pass away, and the body remains. Scarcely will the last shred of my fleshly raiment have been rent from me by the wild beasts to-night, when, putting on a new body as we put on a new garment, I shall go to live in unknown worlds, where I shall rejoin those whom I have loved here on earth."

The invalid looked at Sylvest with an air of surprise, shook his head, and said:

"If you Gauls believe this, courage is easy to you; I am no longer astonished that you are such madmen in battle. Then you do not wish the free meal?"

"No."

"You are wrong; I have always heard say that the death-agony of a man fasting lasts longer than that of one with a full stomach. But do as you like. At sunset, I will come for you; you will be able to boast, at least, of having witnessed one of the finest spectacles in the world—first, the combat of eight gladiators on horseback, professional gladiators; next, twenty-five couples of slave gladiators, compelled to fight to the death; then, the rich, young Lord Norbiac will appear in the arena."

"Lord Norbiac to fight? And with whom?"

"A mere farce; but it is the fashion. He is to fight, armed to the teeth, with a naked slave, armed only with a tin sword, without point or edge; our young lords delight in these diversions.* Then will come the combat of the women, of which I spoke to you, and which is certain to take place."

"Between whom?"

"Between a patrician, one of the most beautiful ladies of Orange, and a freed woman, a celebrated courtesan."

"What are their names? Oh! tell me," asked Sylvest, anxiously.

"The patrician is named Faustina; the courtesan has only been a short time in Orange; she is called the beautiful Gaul. Then we shall have a combat to the death between the celebrated Mount Libanus and Bibrix, the most renowned gladiator of Rome. Lastly, to close the festival, the slaves will be given to the wild beasts; and, by the way, my son, don't forget my advice how to encounter the lion, tiger and ele-

* It was the custom to give a repast of this kind to the slaves who were doomed to the wild beasts.

* The princely gladiators took good care not to risk their lives. "Commodus," says Xiphilin, "who boasted of having killed or vanquished a thousand gladiators, fought only with adversaries armed simply with foils." These combats were cowardly farces, always ending in murder."

phant; as to the crocodile, I can give you no counsel."

Sylvest was left alone. He had learned with surprise of the approaching combat of Faustina and Siomara. For what cause were these women to fight? Was Mount Libanus the object of this rivalry? Sylvest hesitated to believe it; he remembered with what disdain Siomara had treated the gladiator, though she had dismissed him with a few kind words. But three days had passed since that time; and Siomara perhaps had accepted Mount Libanus as a lover through hatred of Faustina rather than through love for this stupid and brutal gladiator; for Sylvest remembered Siomara's confession. She had plunged into sorcery because she was satiated with debauchery. He also remembered, shudderingly, and without being willing to believe it, the eunuch's horrible revelation concerning Belphegor. He was not astonished, moreover, to see the noble Faustina, for the sake of the combat, forget the distance that separated her from the freed courtesan. At Rome, the noblest ladies fought either with each other or with female slaves, and the position of a freed courtesan differed little from that of a slave. What surprised him was that Siomara should have consented to this bloody combat; perhaps she relied on the power of her sorceries to make her come off victorious.

These thoughts kept Sylvest's mind busy till the close of the day. At sunset the turnkey came for him.

"Shall I be given to the beasts with my wrists shackled and my feet chained?" asked he. "Are you not going to take off my irons?"

"No, my son. You will all be led together to a grated arch, opening on the arena and on a level with it; and as you will remain shut up there till the moment that you are given to the beasts, it is feared that meanwhile you might kill each other. Your irons will be taken off a few moments before you enter the arena. Come, my son, follow me; I wish you good, and, above all, speedy luck."

On leaving his dungeon, Sylvest found himself in a long, subterranean gallery, on each side of which he saw the open doors of cells whence many of his doomed comrades had doubtless issued before him. At the end of this gallery, toward which the slaves proceeded, driven forward by the armed turnkeys and keepers, was perceived, through a strong iron grating, a bright light, produced by the illumination of the amphitheatre. Sylvest, filled with anguish at the thought of the combat between his sister and Faustina, was anxious to reach this immense ventiduct, from which he could witness the spectacle, and pushed through his companions, who were in less haste than he. He was one of the first to arrive at the iron bars, from which he heard more and more distinctly the murmuring and tumult of an immense multitude, for the amphitheatre of Orange, like those of Arles, Nîmes, and other cities of Roman Gaul, held twenty-five thousand spectators.

O my poor child! the son of my Loyse, thou, for whom I write this story—thou wilt learn, from the description which I shall give thee of one of the amphitheatres built by the Romans in our ancient Gaul, to what lengths of mad prodigality our oppressors went, enriched as they were by the labor of their slaves, in order to procure for themselves the diversion of human massacres.

The arena of the amphitheatre of Orange, designed for combats and tortures, was of an oval form, a hundred and fifty paces in length, and a hundred in breadth, and was surrounded with a wall massive enough to allow of the construction within its thickness of the arched chamber where the prisoners doomed to the wild beasts were confined.*

This wall, which was of such a height as to prevent the elephants from reaching with their trunks the edge of the platform that surmounted it, was ornamented on the inside with pilasters, which separated the niches filled with large marble statues, which surrounded the arena, and thus presented a sort of terrace in its upper part, where were the chairs of the first gallery. In spite of its elevation above the scene of combat, this gallery was protected with a strong balustrade of gilded bronze, to guard against the bounds of the wild beasts. These chairs, extending round the amphitheatre, were reserved for the richest, noblest, and most important men and women of the town. In this gallery were also seen, opposite each other, the throne of Augustus, the Emperor of Rome and Gaul, and the tribune of the ediles who had arranged the festival.

Behind this gallery, and likewise following the oval shape of the arena, rose an immense number of marble seats placed one above the other, which were reached from the outside through several external galleries, passing round the amphitheatre and connected with each other by staircases. In rainy weather or when the sun was scorching, the spectators were protected by means of the velarium; but on the evening in question there was no need of this immense awning. The night was so serene and the air so calm, that not a breath of wind agitated the flame of the thousands of wax torches placed in the gilded bronze candelabras fixed around the arena, to which

* This is an accurate description of the amphitheatre at Orange.

access was had by four arched passages constructed under the seats and in the thickness of the outer wall. The two entrances at the north and the south were reserved for the gladiators on foot and on horseback. At the east and the west, fronting each other, were seen two grated arches, the one designed for the wild beasts, the other for the slaves condemned to be devoured. Under this arch Sylvest and his comrades had been conducted; and, standing by the iron bars, he examined with mournful curiosity all that he could see outside.

The floor of the arena, covered thickly with sand, colored red in order that the traces of blood might be less visible, was strewed with a quantity of little shining particles, which sparkled in the light of the torches like thousands of silver spangles. A space had not been sanded, but was covered over with a thick plank perforated with holes, beneath which was the tank where the crocodile was awaiting his victims. This movable plank was to be taken away when the wild beasts were let loose in the arena. Here and there, mounted on platforms fixed against the wall of the amphitheatre, Sylvest remarked men dressed like the Pagan god Mercury; their heads were covered with a round steel casque adorned with a pair of gilded wings, and they had no other clothing than red drawers, and sandals, to the heels of which small wings were affixed. Each of these Mercuries had before him a bronze chafing-dish full of live coals, in which long brass rods were heating; these he used to ascertain whether the slave-gladiators, who, when severely wounded, often feigned to be dead in order to avoid fighting longer, had really ceased to breathe; when their wounds were seared by the red-hot rods, it was impossible, under the intense agony, to counterfeit the insensibility of death. These rods were also used to force back to the combat the slaves who gave way before their adversaries.*

Sylvest also remarked round the wall of the arena, and as motionless as the statues in the niches, men of gigantic stature, with long beards, dressed like Pluto, the Pagan god of the infernal regions, with notched copper crowns on their heads, and draped in black togas spangled with silver stars, leaning on the long handles of their heavy blacksmith's hammers. They were styled the Plutos; it was their office to drag the bodies from the arena, and to dispatch with their hammers the victims that still breathed.

Lastly, near the two entrances of the gladiators, stood the heralds-at-arms, clad in white chlamyses, their heads encircled with scarlet bands, and holding ivory rods in their hands. By the side of these heralds were the buccinators, dressed in green doublets embroidered with silver; their breeches, of the same color, were almost hidden by the tops of their great leather boots, which came to the middle of the thigh; and they held in their hands, ready for sounding, their large buccinæ, or horn-trumpets, curved in the fashion of hunting-horns.

The festival was delayed till the arrival of the ediles, although the amphitheatre was overflowing with people. The multitude testified their impatience by cries and hisses. The lighting of the amphitheatre gave the spectacle a strange and almost sinister appearance; the innumerable torches placed round the arena inundated it with light, together with the spectators in the first gallery and the seats nearest the focus of the illumination, which diminished in intensity toward the upper seats, so that the thousands of human figures in the highest benches of the amphitheatre resembled pale spectres, in the reddish, dusky gleams, scarcely distinguishable from the darkness, with the stars of the firmament glittering beneath them.

Suddenly a great bustle was heard in the first gallery, where several places had been hitherto reserved. Sylvest soon saw them occupied by his master, Diabolus, and several young noblemen of his acquaintance, dressed magnificently, like him, and who, like him, had just come from a prolonged feast, for their heads were crowned with green vine-leaves, and they held large bouquets of roses in their hands. The riotous entrance of these young men, their noisy voices, their loud bursts of laughter, and the animation of their features, all showed that they were half intoxicated. Lord Diabolus leaned over the balustrade and looked round the amphitheatre, bowing to one and another of his friends in different directions. He happened to be just opposite the place where those condemned to the beasts were stationed, and where Sylvest was standing behind the bars of the arch. Chancing to cast his eyes that way, he recognized his slave, and, pointing him out to his friends, shook his fist at him, laughing louder than ever.

There are avenging gods in heaven. Just as Diabolus thus insulted his slave's fate, the latter heard his name pronounced by one of his companions behind him. He listened and heard the words in the Gallic tongue: "There must be one of our comrades by

* This horrible institution of Mercuries and Plutos was one of the necessary accessories of all gladiatorial combats. "When the gladiators trained for the combat fell wounded in the arena, for fear that they might be feigning death after having sworn to their masters to fight, as they said, through fire and sword, the Mercury approached the bodies stretched on the ground, and assured himself, by searing their wounds with a red-hot rod, that they were really dead, when, if they showed signs of life, the Pluto dispatched them with his heavy hammer, and then dragged away the corpses. The red-hot rods also served to drive back the refractory to the combat."—*Wallon's History of Slavery in Antiquity.*

the name of Sylvest; why does he not answer? I have called him again and again; is he deaf? Sylvest! Sylvest!"

"I am here by the grating," returned the slave; "I do not want to lose my place; come here if you wish to speak to me."

In a few moments he saw a young man approach him, branded in the forehead as a fugitive slave, who said in a low voice in Gallic:

"Is your name Sylvest?"

"Yes."

"Were you a slave of Lord Diabolus, and had you as a companion a cook by the name of Fourspices?"

"Yes."

"Fourspices has intrusted me with a piece of good news for you. I met him day before yesterday at the market; I have long known him—he is a faithful and trusty friend. 'In two days I shall either be free in the woods or condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts at the coming spectacle,' said I to him, 'for to-night I shall attempt to escape, and my master has threatened that if ever I undertook it again and he caught me, he would send me to the amphitheatre. Will you go with me? The chances of flight are better for two than one.' 'No,' said Fourspices, 'I cannot go with you to-night. But if you are caught, brought back to your master, and sent to the amphitheatre, you will find among the condemned there a Gaul named Sylvest, a slave of Diabolus; tell him this in order to make death sweet to him: Our master has invited a large number of young noblemen of his acquaintance to a splendid feast to-morrow, which is to last till the time of the spectacle, whither they will then repair. I have long been waiting for the hour of vengeance. Sylvest persuaded me to postpone my schemes by assuring me that the Roman army would soon leave Italy, whereupon the slaves would rise in arms—an idle hope, for yesterday it was said at my master's that the Roman army is to remain in Gaul.'"

"What do you say?" cried Sylvest, filled with anxiety. "Is this news true?"

"Yes, for the orders to prepare quarters in the suburbs of Orange for the advance guard, which was to arrive to-morrow, have been countermanded; this I know," replied the slave.

"Woe! woe!" cried Sylvest, despairingly. "When will the day of deliverance arrive?"

"'Rebellion having become impossible,' added Fourspices, 'I hastened to avenge myself and Sylvest at one stroke. I bought a slow but sure poison of a sorceress, which I tried on a dog; it did not take effect till some hours after, when it acted with terrible violence. At to-morrow's feast, the most exquisite dishes of honor, which are not served till the close of the repast, will be poisoned by me, as well as the last amphoræ that will be emptied. According to my experiment on the dog, Diabolus and his friends will expire in the midst of the festival. Tell this to Sylvest, if you meet him in the amphitheatre. If he is doomed to die before seeing Diabolus and his band expire, he will depart certain, at least, of being soon followed by his master and his worthy friends. The blow struck, I shall attempt to fly. If I am taken, I shall have made the sacrifice of my life in advance.' With these words, Fourspices left me. I endeavored to escape; my master was watching me, and surprised me just as I was scaling the wall. Three hours afterward I was sent to the amphitheatre. I have been trying to find you, ever since we were assembled here, in order to keep my promise to Fourspices. At this moment, he has doubtless left his master's house. May the poison be sure, and may these accursed Romans die in their holes like poisoned rats!"

"Do you see yonder in the gallery, over the arch where the wild beasts are confined," said Sylvest, "that young lord crowned with vine-leaves, dressed in a chlamys of blue silk, embroidered with gold, and inhaling the perfume of the roses which he holds in his hand?"

"Yes, I see him."

"That is Lord Diabolus."

"Ah! by all the blood that is to flow," cried the slave, with savage joy, "we shall also have our festival! Laugh, laugh, young lords, fresh from your cups; cast amorous glances at the courtesans—to-night the marble seats of the brilliant gallery will have its dead as well as the blood-stained arena! Look us in the face for a moment, my gay and handsome lords, my proud Roman conquerors — you in your gilded balcony, perfumed with flowers and dazzling with light; we, conquered Gauls, your slaves, in our funeral-vault. Yes, look us in the face and salute us, condemned, as we both are, to die to-night—we, under the claws and teeth of wild beasts; you, writhing in the throes of poison."

The slave, in his increasing excitement, having raised his voice so as to be heard by the other Gauls, to render death sweeter to them, told them of the vengeance of Fourspices. At these words, almost all the slaves, who, till then, moody and silent, though resigned to their fate, had remained seated or lying on the stone floor in the shadow of the arch, rushed to the bars to gaze with savage joy on these young Roman lords, so merry in their cups, yet bearing within their bosom a speedy and terrible death.

This savage joy was at first shared by Sylvest, who quickly reproached himself

for it, remembering how his uncle Albinik, the sailor, who piloted the Roman galleys on the eve of the battle of Vannes, had regarded it as an act of cowardice unworthy of Gallic valor and honor treacherously to engulf in the ocean the thousands of Roman soldiers who had confided in his skill. However excusable the ferocity of Diabolus rendered it, the vengeance of Fourspices was abhorrent to Sylvest, while he would have been the first to give the signal for an armed revolt to break the fetters of slavery, exterminate the Romans, and regain the liberty of Gaul. But when would the hour for this revolt arrive? If he had not been firm in the presence of death, the news which he had just received respecting the stay of the Roman army in Gaul would have taken away all regret at quitting life.

"Happily," thought Sylvest, "men may die, but the nocturnal meetings of the Children of the Mistletoe will continue from age to age, thanks to the Druids! till the day of justice and deliverance shall come."

A loud flourish of trumpets roused Sylvest from his reverie; the buccinators, sounding their instruments, announced the arrival of the ediles. The magistrates took their places in the gallery and the heralds-at-arms gave the signal for the combat. The buccinators again sounded their trumpets. A deep silence fell on the immense multitude, as four couples of gladiators on horseback (professional gladiators) entered the arena through the door at the north, and a like number through that at the south. The former were mounted on white horses with green housings, the latter on black horses, caparisoned with red. Each gladiator was armed with a light lance and a painted and gilded buckler; a bronze casque, with the visor down, and pierced only with two holes for the eyes, concealed his face; and an iron armlet and gauntlet covered his right arm; the rest of the body was naked, for he wore nothing but his gladiator's apron, which was fastened above the hips by a brass belt, from which a long sword was suspended, and his feet were shod with iron sandals. These professional gladiators were free; they at least fought voluntarily like brave men, as the ancestors of Sylvest had often fought through excess of valor alone, and not as unhappy slaves forced to slaughter each other for no other reason than the diversion of their masters. Glorious and worthy is the combat that is voluntary! Owing to the weakness of the Gauls for bravery, Sylvest and some of his comrades, with their faces glued to the iron bars, forgot their approaching death, interested, despite themselves, in the valorous combat, and applauding, with voice and gesture, the address and daring displayed. A great number of these horsemen were killed, as well as their horses, and not one left the arena without a wound. The combat of the mounted gladiators ended, the corpses carried out of the arena by the Plutos, and the dead horses dragged off by richly caparisoned mules which were harnessed to them, there was a moment of repose.

Prolonged roars were then heard from the back of the arch opposite that where the condemned slaves were stationed, and which was grated like theirs, and divided into three compartments. Presently they saw four lions slowly enter one of the compartments, three tigers another, and an elephant, so enormous that his back almost touched the ceiling, the third and middle one. These animals, for a moment dazzled by the bright light of the amphitheatre, did not at first approach the gratings, but remained half in the shade, where their glaring eyeballs were seen and their sullen growls heard. A shudder of horror ran through the slaves; the most faint-hearted, uttering heart-rending groans, fainted or threw themselves on the ground, hiding their faces; others broke out into imprecations against the Romans, while others, gloomy but resolute, appeared insensible to the peril.

The buccinators sounded their trumpets anew; the heralds-at-arms opened the barriers of the arena, and a great number of slave-gladiators entered, who had been offered or sold by their masters for this bloody festival, and who were forced to fight to the death. All wore casques of different form; some with the vizors barred, others with whole vizors, or with one or two apertures for the eyes. Their gladiator's apron, of red or white stuff, was fastened above their hips by a leather belt, leaving their bodies, thighs, and arms bare. Several wore an iron armlet on the right arm and an iron jambart on the left leg; all had a sword in their hand, and almost all a buckler on their left arm. A few had, instead of this defensive weapon, a net fringed with lead rolled around their arm, and designed to be thrown over the enemy's head in order to obstruct his movements and to enable them to strike him more easily.

Slavery often enervates the brave and redoubles the cowardice of the timid. Most of these gladiators by compulsion, far from feeling any hatred toward each other, were rather bound together by companionship in misfortune; the brave were indignant at the thought of employing their valor for the diversion of masters whom they abhorred, and of being reduced to the condition of fighting-dogs. No sooner had they entered the arena, than three of the slaves killed themselves by falling on their swords before the heralds-at-arms had posted the antago-

nists opposite each other; others, maddened with terror, threw away their swords and bucklers, and, bursting into tears, fell on their knees and stretched their hands imploringly toward the spectators, who hooted at them with scorn. One old man ran and embraced the feet of one of the great marble statues in the niches representing the Pagan gods, as if he would place himself under its protection. At a sign from the ediles, the Mercuries drew their long red-hot rods from the brasier and threatened the old man and the kneeling slaves, who, thus placed between the fear of these horrible burns and that of a deadly combat, resigned themselves to the latter. The conflict commenced. Some fought with the frenzy of despair, happy to find in death the end of their sufferings; others, at the first wound, knelt, and, in haste to have it over, offered their throats to their adversary, who was forced to kill them, while awaiting his own turn, amidst the loud applause of the spectators. Some, covered with wounds, and with difficulty dragging themselves along, raised the palm of their left hand, according to custom, toward the spectators, to implore their lives, forgetting that professional gladiators alone had this right, and that every slave that entered the arena quitted it dead, either slain by the sword or with his brains dashed out by the hammer of the Plutos. Several, in fine, who were grievously wounded, feigned to be dead. One of these, a young and vigorous slave, had fought bravely; at the last encounter he fell, with his body pierced with wounds, near the grating behind which Sylvest was standing. The latter himself believed the slave dead; his limbs were rigid; his head, covered with a casque with the vizor closed, fell back, and he lay motionless. One of the Mercuries, perceiving him, drew near with his long red-hot rod, and seared one of the wounds of the slave. The live flesh hissed and smoked, but the body lay motionless despite the torture. The Mercury, believing him dead, withdrew; then, on second thought, he returned and plunged his rod through one of the apertures of the gladiator's vizor. The sharp, hot iron doubtless pierced the eye, for the slave, this time overcome with agony, leaped up, uttering unearthly howls, took a few steps, and fell. Two Plutos instantly ran to him, and, striking his casque with their heavy hammers as if it had been an anvil, battered his head till Sylvest saw a nameless mass of blood, flesh, brains, and bits of bone spirt through the broken vizor.

At this horrible spectacle, which crowned the butchery, Sylvest could no longer restrain himself; he burst forth with a loud voice into the chorus of the bards at the nocturnal meeting of the Children of the Mistletoe, "Flow, flow, blood of the captive! Fall, fall, ensanguined dew! Take root and grow, avenging harvest!"

Sylvest was not the only Child of the Mistletoe among the condemned; other voices soon joined with him, keeping time with their clanking chains, "Flow, flow, blood of the captive! Fall, fall, ensanguined dew!"

These death-songs were soon drowned by a great tumult; the arena was strewn with the dead and the dying; not one of the combatants remained on his feet. Suddenly, the heralds shouted "The patients! The doctors!"

A great number of feeble old men, richly clad, some leaning upon slaves, others supporting themselves with their canes, instantly rushed into the arena; middle-aged men and youths were also among these invalids. All knelt or crouched by the side of the dying, and each, greedily putting his mouth to the wounds, sucked the warm blood that was pouring from them, some seeking in this blood the restoration of their exhausted vigor; and others the cure of epilepsy. Here and there physicians, armed with sharp instruments, ripped open the still warm bodies, and took out the livers, which they used as remedies for diseases.* The physicians supplied and the rich invalids gorged with blood, the Plutos dispatched the slaves that still survived with their hammers, and, aided by the Mercuries, carried off the bodies, while the servants of the amphitheatre, by means of long rakes, mixed the blood with the sand of the arena.

At this moment the wild beasts, more and more excited by the sight of this prolonged carnage, as well as by the warm and acrid odor of the blood, redoubled their roars, and bounded furiously to and fro in their cages, shaking the bars with their enormous claws. To these roars of the animals to which they were soon to fall a prey, Sylvest and the Gallic slaves responded by the chorus, "Flow, flow, blood of the captive! Fall, fall, ensanguined dew! Take root and grow, avenging harvest!"

The first act was over, and the interlude followed. During this interruption, Sylvest and the slaves cast their eyes on Diabolus and his friends; all continued gay and animated. Diabolus had been one of the most obstinate in refusing life even to the free gladiators, who, when wounded, asked grace

* "We see men in the amphitheatre drink the blood of the gladiators," says Pliny, "seeking a remedy for the falling sickness in this beverage in which life is still fermenting; they think that there is nothing more efficacious for this malady than to drink warm blood, thus inhaling the very source of the life of man, like the last breath of the soul, from the lips of the wound." Scribonius Largus, who lived in the time of Tiberius, says that, though he has little faith in remedies of this kind, he confesses that he has seen some good effects from them; for instance, when a particle of the liver of a slain gladiator is taken in nine separate doses.

of the spectators by an imploring gesture. Sylvest, nevertheless, remarked that, owing doubtless to the slow and sure effects of Fourspices' poison, the bright flush on his master's countenance, excited by wine and the sight of the bloody festival, was beginning to fade, especially on the forehead, nose and chin, which were turning a waxen hue. The same change was visible in the features of the other young lords, who, however, appeared equally noisy and merry with Diabolus; for, comedy having for a few instants succeeded tragedy, all welcomed with shouts of laughter the appearance of their friend Norbiac, who made a false step and stumbled the moment he entered the arena.

This ridiculous and cowardly Gaul, whose self-sufficiency and folly made him the butt of everybody, having heard it said that at Rome the fashionable nobles sometimes fought as gladiators, resolved, through vanity, to imitate them. A steel casque, with a gilt crest of towering height, covered his head, and his face was hidden by his closed vizor; prudently clad in iron from head to foot, with gorget, cuirass, armlets, gauntlets, cuisses, jambarts, and boots of scale armor, he looked like a tortoise in his shell. He walked with difficulty, bowed down by his heavy armor, and carrying besides a complete arsenal, to say nothing of his gilt buckler, having for an emblem a lion painted in bright colors, holding in his right paw a scroll on which was written in large letters the name of Siomara. Not having renounced his love for the beautiful Gaul, he doubtless hoped to touch her heart by thus displaying his courage in the festival in which she also was to fight.

Norbiac held in his hand a long sword; a dagger was suspended from his belt on one side, and a battle-axe and sharp-pointed mace on the other. Scarcely had he recovered from the shock caused by his false step, when it was evident, from the embarrassment and hesitation of his movements, that the holes in his vizor, which had probably been pierced too low, were of little use to him, for he tried two or three times, in vain, to raise the vizor amid the laughter of the crowd.

The slave destined to fight with Norbiac entered by the other door of the arena. His gladiator's apron was his only clothing and armor; for his sole defensive weapon, he carried a large tin sword, a child's toy. He appeared, however, young, agile and robust. The herald-at-arms and the buccinators gave the signal for the assault. Norbiac, covering his body, already defended by his thick cuirass, with his buckler, whirled his long sword around him, standing on the defensive. The slave, armed with a useless weapon, remained out of reach of his adversary's weapon, postponing a hand-to-hand struggle till Norbiac's arm, unused to handling a heavy weapon, should have become wearied. The whirling of the sword, indeed, began already to slacken, and hoots and jests were heard from all sides, especially from the upper seats. "The windmill is stopping!" cried some. "The steel manikin has run down!" said others.

The Gallic slaves, from the depths of their vault, applauded the contempt and insults that were heaped on this cowardly perjurer —this stupid imitator of the Romans. The ediles, however, unwilling to permit a rich nobleman to serve any longer as a laughing-stock to the crowd, made a sign to one of the Mercuries of the arena, upon which the latter drew his red-hot rod from the furnace and touched the back of the slave, who had hitherto remained beyond the reach of Norbiac's sword. The surprise and pain of the burn made the slave bound forward and fall, despite himself, on his adversary's blade, thus receiving two deep wounds in his face and breast. Throwing away his tin sword, he rushed upon his steel-clad adversary, and, throwing him on the ground, snatched his iron mace from his belt and began to batter his casque, while Norbiac cried lustily for help, to the great satisfaction of the crowd. The strength of the slave, however, gave way with the blood that flowed from his wounds; he soon relaxed his blows, and, letting fall his mace, raised his faltering hand to implore life, and sank by the side of Norbiac, whose shrill cries had changed to lamentable groans, and who attempted to rise.

Though the slave was destined in advance to perish according to custom, the spectators in the uppermost seats cried, "Grant the slave his life! Pardon! Pardon!" The spectators in the first gallery and the seats nearest it, including Diabolus and his friends, however, though they had been the first to laugh at Norbiac, thought it a dangerous example to spare a slave that had so soundly pummeled his master, and demanded death, whereupon, at a sign from the edile, a Pluto dashed out the wounded man's brains. At this moment, Norbiac, who had at last succeeded in rising, and whose terror gave him strength, commenced running about the arena, in spite of the weight of his armor, extending his hands before him like a man whose eyes were bandaged. In this manner he fell into the arms of one of the heralds, who led him off the arena amidst universal hoots.

The arena being left empty for a moment, the friend of Fourspices said to Sylvest and his companions, "Look at Diabolus and his friends; how their pallor increases, till they are almost of a greenish hue; and their eyes

are sunk almost out of sight in the hollow sockets, which grow more haggard every moment! Just heaven! Fourspices' poison is sure in its effect, but these gay lords probably as yet feel no pain. But, look! one of them puts his hand to his brow, as if his head were heavy!"

"And another has just sat down and is shading his eyes with his hands, as if he were dazzled or giddy!"

A shudder ran through the crowd, and the names of Faustina and Siomara, simultaneously pronounced, sounded in the ears of Sylvest as if uttered by a single loud voice composed of these millions of voices. Alas! Siomara inspired him with as much abhorrence as terror; but at this portentous moment, when he was about to catch a glimpse of his sister for the last time, he forgot the courtesan and sorceress, and remembered only the innocent child of former days—the companion of his youth.

The buccinators sounded their trumpets. All the spectators rose, and, eagerly leaning forward toward the arena, exclaimed, in a voice breathless with impatience and curiosity, "There they are! there they are!"

Their expectation was for an instant disappointed. This blast did not as yet announce the entrance of Siomara and Faustina, but of Mount Libanus, who preceded them—not to fight to the death with the renowned Bibrix, for he was alone, and the combat of the two gladiators was not to take place until after that of the courtesan and the patrician lady. What business had Mount Libanus in this place—he who was perhaps the cause of the rivalry about to be decided by the death of one of the two women? The giant presented himself in the arena with a swaggering air, amidst applause and enthusiastic shouts. Save his gladiator's apron, an iron jambart on his left leg, and an iron armlet on his right arm, his body, as hairy as that of a bear and as athletic as that of the Pagan Hercules, was naked and anointed with oil. By a refinement of vanity, his numerous scars were painted vermilion in order to set off their lustre in the eyes of the spectators. A casque of polished steel without a vizor—he disdained this protection—covered his huge head. With his left hand on his hip, and two short, light swords in his right, he walked round the arena, casting bold glances at the noble ladies in the gallery, who, waving their handkerchiefs, cried, with ardor, "Hail to Mount Libanus! Hail to the conqueror of conquerors!"

But the trumpets of the buccinators sounded anew, and the crowd cried, this time with truth, "There they are! there they are!"

It was they. Faustina and Siomara entered the arena, the one by the northern and the other by the southern door. Men and women, all, even to the ediles, rose anew, and a deep silence reigned throughout the immense multitude.

The patrician and the courtesan advanced, calm and resolute, with uplifted brows and confident glances, braving all eyes; it was long since they had known timidity, modesty, or shame.

Faustina wore the light casque of the pagan Minerva, adorned with a tuft of slender scarlet plumes; her short visor disclosed her pale, bold face, black eyes and red lips, encircled by two heavy tresses of ebony hair, braided with pearls, the ends of which were covered by the ear-pieces of the casque. Her cuirass was a simple net work of gold, with large meshes, showing her dead-white skin, and imprisoning her supple and nervous body from her shoulders to her hips, where it was confined by a narrow belt of gold, set with precious stones to which was fastened her tunic of scarlet, silk, reaching just above the bare knee. A sort of gaiter, of flexible scales of gold, reached to the ankle, and partially encased her foot, disclosing nothing but the tip of the morocco sandal, embroidered with precious stones.

If horrible profligacy and the habitual dominion of the most ferocious passions had not imprinted on the features of this monster a revolting expression of sanguinary and licentious boldness, she would have appeared possessed of sinister beauty—so ardent was her look, and so proud her brow, at the moment of this deadly combat.

Siomara, through her armor, and her resplendent beauty—for her features, to the profound stupefaction of Sylvest, wore at this moment their usual open serenity—presented a striking contrast to Faustina. Her Greek casque, of chased silver, adorned with a tuft of slender blue plumes, left her whole face exposed. Her fair hair, which had lately been cut quite short, fell in luxuriant curls around her face and neck. Her nymph-like body, like that of Faustina, was confined in a silver net-work, showing her rosy-tinted skin; and her narrow silver belt, her short tunic of cerulean blue, embroidered with pearls, and her gaiters of silver-scale armor, were of the same fashion as those of Faustina.

The expression of Siomara's face was not proud, immodest and gloomy, like that of her rival. No; her large eyes, as gentle as her smile, seemed to denote a calm trustfulness; and, on seeing his sister so radiantly beautiful in her warlike casque, Sylvest asked himself again by what perpetual miracle, the pupil of Trymalcion, the celebrated courtesan, the poisoner, the magician, the hideous and sacrilegious profaner of tombs, preserved this ingenuous and charming exterior.

The two women slowly walked around

the arena and met at the place where Mount Libanus was awaiting them, with the short swords in his hand. The perforated plank which covered the tank of the crocodile, and which occupied the middle of the arena, probably not having appeared an advantageous spot for the combat, the gladiator had chosen a place so near the arch, beneath which the slaves were awaiting death, that, when Faustina and Siomara joined Mount Libanus, Sylvest was but a few steps from his sister. Yielding to an involuntary impulse, he fell back into the shade, in order to escape Siomara's eyes, but mingled affection, terror and terrible curiosity soon brought him to the grating. A power above his will kept him there; he could thus more attentively observe the face of Mount Libanus, whose airs of swaggering brutality and effrontery were succeeded by a perceptible emotion. Pale and troubled, with a sword in each hand, he offered the left to Faustina and the right to Siomara; but his hands trembled so much when the women prepared to take the weapons, that his increasing anxiety and agitation attracted the notice of Faustina, who cast on him one of her dark and piercing glances, and, after reflecting, waved away the sword that he offered her and attempted to take the other.

"No," said Mount Libanus, recoiling almost with affright, "not that one, but the other."

"Why not?" asked Faustina, with an air of gloomy distrust.

"Because, being the judge of the combat," stammered the giant, "it belongs to me to give the weapons."

Siomara, who had paid no attention to this discussion, having fixed her eyes, before it commenced, on the arch where the slaves were confined, suddenly recognized Sylvest. Springing toward the grating and seizing both her brother's hands through the bars, she cried, in a voice of emotion, while large tears filled her eyes:

"You here, brother! You condemned!"

"Yes, I am about to die. The gods grant that you may die likewise, and that, before the evening is past, we may rejoin together our kindred who have gone before us to unknown spheres! May Hesus and our parents pardon you, as I do!"

"Trusting in your promise, I awaited your coming. Alas! that I believed your word. You would now have been at liberty."

"It was to escape this shameful liberty that I wished to die."

Siomara, at first excited, suddenly became smiling and almost joyous. She said to her brother, "Listen—bend down your ear." He obeyed mechanically. She whispered, "Brother, you shall not die. Faustina, through a magic spell, will fall beneath my sword. Diabolus is yonder; with one word he can snatch you from punishment. He will speak this word after the death of Faustina. Courage, brother! this evening we shall sup together, and you will be free."

With these words, the smiling Siomara made a sign of intelligence to her brother, threw him a farewell kiss from the tips of her fingers, and hastened to rejoin Faustina and Mount Libanus, amidst a murmur of surprise in the amphitheatre at this brief conversation between the beautiful Gaul and one of the condemned slaves.

When Siomara returned to Mount Libanus, the latter, paler and more agitated than ever, held but one sword in his hand, while his stolid face at once depicted embarrassment, grief, and terror.

"Give me my sword!" said Siomara.

The gladiator appeared to make a violent effort at self-control, and, in spite of an abrupt and threatening gesture from Faustina, repulsed the hand which Siomara extended to grasp the weapon, exclaiming, "No, no, not that sword!" With his only remaining eye, he strove to make her understand his meaning, but, wholly engrossed by another thought, she did not heed the sighs of the gladiator, but turned toward the gallery where Diabolus and his friends were seated, and, saluting the Roman with look and gesture, she plucked one of the slender blue plumes from her silver casque, took it between her fingers, and carried it to her rosy lips, then gracefully blew it in the direction of the gallery, saying aloud, "To thee, handsome Diabolus!" after which she cast a stealthy glance at her brother.

Sylvest understood, with a shudder, that his sister had given Diabolus the pledge of an infamous bargain, of which his own liberty was to be the price; for, as Siomara had said to him, any master had the right at the last moment to withdraw his slave from punishment. Faustina slain, the beautiful Gaul, during the combat between Mount Libanus and Bibrix, would ask Sylvest's liberty of Diabolus; she would obtain the favor by an infamous promise, and he would be withdrawn from the vault.

While Sylvest was in despair at the thought, preferring death to such a deliverance, all eyes were fixed on Diabolus. A murmur of envy arose from the young nobles at the tempting appeal of the beautiful Gaul, hitherto disdainful of all homage. Diabolus, like most of his table companions, had become of a greenish pallor; but whether he did not yet feel the effects of the poison, or whether intoxicated with pride by the flattering address of the celebrated courtesan, he was unmindful of the first attack of pain, he leaned, radiant with joy, from the balcony, and, pressing to his lips the bouquet of roses which he held, threw it into the arena, exclaiming, "Victory and love to the beautiful Gaul!"

The courtesan picked up the bouquet and carried it to her lips in turn; then, placing it at the foot of one of the gigantic marble statues that filled the deep niches in the wall of the arena, she cast a last glance at her brother, and, returning to Mount Libanus, said to him impatiently, "My sword, my sword!"

The gladiator this time did not refuse the weapon to the courtesan; on the contrary, he placed it in her hand with a terrible glance.

Sylvest divined the whole. He had witnessed Mount Libanus' protestations of love for Siomara; but at the moment when, in the hope of obtaining her brother's liberty, she had so openly courted Diabolus, the features of the gladiator, at first as agitated as moved, suddenly expressed frightful jealousy and ferocity, while Faustina, as motionless as a spectre, with her left hand on her hip and the point of her sword resting on the tip of her sandal, smiled with an air of sinister triumph.

Sylvest no longer had any doubts; one of the two swords held by the gladiator was enchanted, owing to the spells of Siomara. In concert with her, Mount Libanus knew the magic weapon; but, his confusion having aroused the suspicions of Faustina, she had refused the sword that he offered her, and had taken the other, almost in spite of him. The gladiator now rejoiced at this choice as much as he had at first been appalled by it; to such a point had his love for the courtesan been changed to furious hatred, through jealousy of Diabolus.

Scarcely had Siomara taken the sword, than she said in a low voice to Faustina, "Are you ready?"

"I am ready," answered the patrician; adding, in a low voice, but loud enough for Sylvest to hear, "Do you remember our conditions?"

"Yes."

"Mount Libanus is mine if I kill you; yours if you kill me?"

"Yes."

"Dead or alive, you belong to me, Siomara, if you cannot continue the combat after the first wound?"

"And if I kill you, Faustina, none but I will enter your tomb for the death-watch?"

"No; I have given orders to that effect, and have handed you the keys of my family sepulchre."

"Come on, noble Faustina."

"Come on, beautiful Siomara."

On a sign from Mount Libanus, the two young women rushed on each other with uplifted weapons, Siomara still smiling as if certain of triumph, Faustina also confident, but with an implacable look. At the first clash of the swords, that of the courtesan's broke short off to the hilt. Sylvest could not restrain a cry; he saw the Roman, with a ferocious burst of laughter, plunge her sword into Siomara's side, crying, "Take that, thou false Thessalian sorceress!"

The wound was grave, perhaps mortal. The courtesan let fall the hilt of her broken weapon, sank on her knees, and cast a last look toward Sylvest, exclaiming, in a faltering voice, "Poor brother!" With these words, she rolled backward on the sand, while her casque, falling off, left her fair head bare, and the blood, gushing from her wound, stained the silver meshes of her cuirass.

Faustina, roaring with joy, fell on her rival like a tigress on its prey, and, rage and hatred redoubling her strength, twined her frail, nervous arms about her body, raised her from the ground, and carried her off as if she had been a child, crying to the gladiator, in a loud voice, "Mount Libanus, I will await you at the temple of the canal." And Faustina disappeared with her victim in the shadow of the northern arch, amidst the frenzied acclamations of the spectators.

This had passed so rapidly that Sylvest thought himself the sport of a dream. He felt a sort of vertigo, from which he was aroused by the clanking of the chains which the turnkey and the armed soldiers were knocking off his companions' feet and hands. The time had come to unshackle the slaves condemned to the wild beasts, which were growling fiercely.

Sylvest stood motionless by the side of the grating, with a vacant stare. Two of the turnkeys seized him and knocked off his chains. Weeping, in spite of himself, at his sister's death, although he had desired it, he sank on the stone floor of the vault, with his face buried in his hands, indifferent to what was passing in the arena, where Mount Libanus and Bibrix were then fighting. From time to time loud murmurs announced the varying chances of the combat. "Courage, Mount Libanus! courage!" cried some; "Courage, Bibrix! courage!" cried others. At length, after a considerable time, a tremendous shout of "Bibrix is victorious!" made the walls of the amphitheatre tremble. Mount Libanus had just succumbed in the deadly struggle.

All at once Sylvest was violently pushed about and trodden on by his companions, who were flying pell-mell. He rose, not without difficulty, to avoid being crushed by them, and saw, rapidly approaching from the other end of the vault, a sort of fiery wall, of about the height of a man, and barring the whole width of the arch. This immense bronze plate, heated by means of braziers on rollers, drove the condemned before it. The grating which had hitherto separated them from the

arena had been sunk to a level with the ground by means of a groove and pulley, so that the unfortunates, driven forward by the fiery wall, could only escape the most horrible burns by leaping into the arena where the wild beasts were bounding to and fro, and from which Plutos, Mercuries, heralds, and buccinators had disappeared, after carrying off the corpse of Mount Libanus, and closing the two entrances at the north and south by means of doors barred with iron.

The moment of torture come, Sylvest, resolved to end his life valiantly with his companions, exclaimed, "Children of the Mistletoe, will you die like worthy sons of old Gaul?"

"Yes, yes," repeated numerous voices.

"Brothers, sing with me, in the face of death, "'Flow, flow, blood of the captive! Fall, fall, ensanguined dew! Take root and grow, avenging harvest!'"

The Children of the Mistletoe, together with the other Gallic slaves, headed by Sylvest, rushed into the arena, thundering forth the bard's chorus in their native tongue.

This burst of song and the appearance of this troop of men at first took the animals by surprise. Profiting by their hesitation and remembering the counsels of the turnkey, Sylvest, seeing that the elephant had betaken himself to one of the niches in the wall, adorned with a gigantic marble statue, a few paces distant from him, gave a last thought to his wife Loyse and also to Siomara, ran straight to the animal, and in the hope of soon being stamped upon and crushed by him, threw himself flat on his belly, and crept under the huge beast in order to cling with both hands to one of his great feet.

At that instant cries, at first stifled, then more and more lamentable, among which Sylvest distinguished the voice of his master, rose from the part of the gallery where Diabolus and his friends were sitting. These cries were accompanied with an extraordinary tumult in the amphitheatre. A thought instantly darted like lightning across Sylvest's mind—a cowardly thought, he confesses, for it prompted him to attempt to escape the torture which his companions were about to suffer, but with this thought came the remembrance of his wife and child.

The eyes of all the spectators, instead of being turned toward the arena, were naturally fixed at this moment on Diabolus and his friends, then, doubtless, writhing in the agonies of death by poison before the gaze of the astonished crowd. The huge body of the elephant, posted against one of the niches in the wall, partially concealed it; and at the risk of being discovered later, after creeping under the belly of the animal instead of seizing one of his hind-legs, he crawled between them, climbed on the base of the niche, and succeeded in crouching behind a marble statue twice his height, and fortunately representing a female figure in flowing drapery.

Scarcely was he concealed when the confusion in the amphitheatre was quieted, and he heard the exclamation, "Here are the doctors. Carry away the dying men; their agonies interrupt the festival."

Diabolus and his expiring friends were, doubtless, transported from the gallery, for silence was restored by degrees—a silence that was speedily broken by the fresh roars of the wild beasts, which had recovered from their first surprise.

The carnage began: amidst the growls of the animals, the cries of agony of some of the slaves who had already fallen under the claws of the lions and tigers, and the imprecations of the victims as yet untouched, some of whom, maddened with terror, entreated the furious brutes to spare their lives, here and there resounded the piercing voices of the Children of the Mistletoe, singing even in the fangs of the ferocious beasts, "Flow, flow, blood of the captive! Fall, fall, ensanguined dew! Take root and grow, avenging harvest!"

From time to time, Sylvest saw from his retreat, no longer masked by the elephant, which was then in the middle of the arena, a lion or a tiger bound forward in pursuit of a slave, whom he threw down with his paws, burying his nails in the flesh; then crouching or stretching himself on his prey, he devoured it or tore it to pieces.

Sylvest saw among others—and the memory is horrible!—a huge, tawny lion, with a mane almost black, rush upon the friend of Fourspices. To die more speedily, the unfortunate Gaul had fallen upon his knees; but in his terror he buried his face in his hands to hide the monster from his sight. The lion, with one stroke of the paw on the crown of the slave's head, threw his face to the ground and held it there; then planting the nails of the other paw in his loins, drew his prey transversely toward him. Having him thus secure, the brute was in no haste to devour him; panting and breathless, he stretched himself his whole length on the sand, with his huge head on the body of the slave, while a bloody foam trickled from his open jaws and lolling tongue. The Gaul was still alive and uttering inarticulate cries; his arms and legs writhed and beat the ground, and from the convulsions of his whole body it was evident that he was striving, but in vain, to escape the atrocious torture. Suddenly, the lion's mane bristled, and his tail lashed the sand; he reared up on his hind-feet, still holding the Gaul with his fore-paws; then, suddenly lowering his head, he bit his prey

through the middle of the spine and crushed it in his teeth, growling fiercely meanwhile. A black and yellow spotted tiger, of equal size with the lion, approached to dispute with him his victim. The lion, without letting go his hold, raised his paw, the claws of which had been buried in the skull of the slave, and struck them into the muzzle of the tiger. The latter, despite the wound, opened his jaws, seized the head of the Gaul which the lion was holding with the other paw, and, with bristling back and bent muzzle, violently drew it toward him, while the lion, with his teeth still fixed in the middle of the back, pulled in the opposite direction. Both rose from their crouching position to end the struggle by snatching the body in two. The slave had not yet ceased to live; raised from the ground by the two ferocious beasts that disputed him with each other, his limbs still writhed convulsively. The huge body of the elephant, passing before Sylvest, concealed from him the frightful mutilation.

The furious elephant held in his trunk a young slave, a child of fifteen at most, who writhed in the air, uttering terrible cries. The elephant, in his rage, twice struck the poor bruised body violently against the wall; when he had thus broken the bones of the unfortunate, he threw the child under his feet, tried to pierce him with his tusks, and finally stamped on him angrily. While thus venting his rage on the bleeding remains, now nothing but a shapeless mass of human flesh, he stumbled and struck his hind-leg against a slave who was flying from a tiger, and who passed at that moment between him and the tank of the crocodile. The slave was precipitated by the shock into the slimy bed of the reptile, as many others before him had been in their bewildered flight, and Sylvest instantly heard the shrieks of the unfortunate as he was cut to pieces by the notched teeth of the crocodile.

This carnage lasted till naught remained of the slaves given to the wild beasts but half-gnawed bones or nameless and shapeless remains. During the whole duration of this Roman festival, the multitude, half drunk with the bloody spectacle, cheered it with shouts and acclamations.

At length the torches, almost burned to the socket, gave but a flickering light, while the lions and tigers, gorged with human flesh, and dull and silent, stretched their huge bodies in the bloody mire of the arena, yawning, blowing, and licking their enormous paws, before passing them over their blood-stained muzzles.

Sylvest heard the distant murmur of the crowd quitting the amphitheatre. Presently, the keepers appeared by the north and south doors, dressed in heavy iron armor, which was proof against the bite of the animals, and armed with long tridents, red-hot from the furnace. The wearied and gorged beasts, accustomed to the voice of the keepers, and, above all, terrified by the pricks of the tridents, were driven by the light of the expiring torches into the three compartments of the arch which served as their cages; then, by means of a wheel turned by the servants of the amphitheatre, the gratings rose from their subterranean grooves, the arches were closed, and the movable plank was replaced over the tank of the crocodile. After extinguishing all the torches, the keepers hastily quitted the arena, saying to each other in a low voice, full of terror, "It is the hour for the magicians."

The profoundest silence reigned in the darkness of the amphitheatre. Saved from death by a miraculous chance—for if the shrieks of Diabolus and his expiring friends had not diverted all eyes from the arena, it would have been impossible for him, although half concealed by the elephant, to have reached the niche where he crouched without being seen—Sylvest, thus miraculously preserved, returned thanks to Hesus. As if the gods were this night especially gracious to him, he remembered that his wife Loyse, at their last interview, had promised to wait for him four nights from that time at the end of the canal in the park of Faustina. He also remembered Faustina's last words to Mount Libanus, as she carried off the fainting Siomara in her arms, "Mount Libanus, I will await you at the temple of the canal.

A sinister presentiment told the slave that the patrician, having Siomara alive, perhaps, in her power, would make her suffer all the tortures that a depraved, jealous, and ferocious woman could invent for a hated rival. Doubtless, the temple of the canal was the place of these tortures. Sylvest resolved to hasten to the park of the Villa Faustina. With a listening ear he at last emerged from his hiding-place. Suddenly, he felt himself a prey to strange terrors. As he crossed the arena, he heard the flight of great birds of night, swooping silently to the ground; twice or thrice he shudderingly felt the wind from their wings on his brow; he was also several times jostled and almost thrown down by hairy bodies that passed swiftly by him. They were, doubtless, the magicians, who had come, in the form of strange animals, to seek bloody remains for their sorceries. Perchance Siomara had escaped through magic from the power of Faustina, and was among these monsters.

The slave, chancing to step on a sword dropped by one of the gladiators, picked it up. It was short and sharp; he armed himself with it, and having at length reached the northern entrance, made his way

through a long arched passage, and soon found himself outside the outer wall of the amphitheatre, situated in the suburbs of Orange. Half an hour would take him to the park of Faustina. He walked rapidly, reached there in safety, scaled the park-wall, as usual, by means of a bough, and ran to the end of the canal, where he scarcely hoped to meet Loyse, so far was the night advanced.

Thank heaven! the poor slave also has his moments of joy. Sylvest had hardly advanced a few paces on the terrace of the canal, when he heard his wife's voice saying, "Sylvest, Sylvest, is it you?"

The slave could not answer. He threw himself, sobbing, into his wife's arms, and held her long to his breast, covering her with tears and kisses.

"You are weeping!" she said, with anguish; "some misfortune threatens you!"

"No, no, Loyse, the gods are gracious to us; but we have not an instant to lose; day will soon break. Will you risk the chances of flight? They are terrible, but we shall brave them together."

"Sylvest, I have more than once proposed to you to fly, but you have refused."

"Yes, but now I consent; you shall know why. Have you the strength to accompany me, my beloved wife?"

"My love for you and for our child will give me this strength. But whither shall we fly? In what direction?"

"By setting out instantly, we can reach a deserted and barren valley before daybreak; there we shall find a cavern, where I have already been at nocturnal meetings, and where we will at first remain concealed. We will take fruits and roots on our way from the gardens along the road. There is a torrent not far from the cave; we shall have no fear, therefore, of wanting food and water for some days. We will then consider what to do; perhaps the gods will take pity on us."

At that moment, a prolonged shriek—a horrible and unearthly cry, which was weakened by the distance—reached the ears of Sylvest and his wife. Loyse said, shuddering, "Oh! those shrieks! those shrieks again!"

"Have you heard them before?"

"Several times since I have been waiting here for you. At times, they would cease; then, after a considerable time, they would begin again more frightful than ever. Faustina is torturing some slave."

"Faustina!" exclaimed Sylvest, stupefied, and thinking of Siomara, whom he had forgotten in the joy of meeting Loyse. "Do these shrieks come from the temple of the canal?"

"Yes. Nevertheless, it was said this evening that our mistress was going to the amphitheatre; but, just as I left the amphitheatre, a freedman from there rode at full gallop through the gardens toward the temple, to inform Faustina, he said, of the death of Mount Libanus."

"There is no doubt; it is Siomara," cried Sylvest. "They have carried her to that accursed temple. O woe, woe! Come, come, Loyse!"

"Where are you going?" said Sylvest's companion, clinging to his arm, and seeing him rush off like one distracted. "Do you not hear those cries? Faustina is there! To approach the temple is to risk our destruction."

But Sylvest no longer heard Loyse. The nearer he came to the temple, the more distinct became the shrieks of the victim—so distinct, indeed, that he recognized Siomara's voice, stifled from time to time by songs and the sound of lyres, flutes, and cymbals.

The terrified Loyse followed her husband, no longer attempting to detain him. Both soon reached the circular portico that surrounded the temple. A bright light escaped from the apertures in the entablature from which Sylvest, unseen, had witnessed the horrible mysteries of four nights before. Suddenly, a last shriek, even more frightful than the others, and seeming like a death-cry, arose amidst the silence of the night, followed by the words—a last appeal, uttered in a voice still strong, but sinking and breathless with pain—"Sylvest! Mother! Father!"

The slave, taking his sword between his teeth, sprang forward to climb one of the columns of the portico, as he had done before. What he would have said or done had he reached the apertures in the entablature, he knows not, for at that moment one frenzied idea alone possessed him—to go to the aid of Siomara, and to avenge her by the death of Faustina. But Loyse, more and more terrified by her husband's agitation, clung to his arm with all her might, and prevented him from mounting the column, exclaiming, "You are destroying us! Think of our child!"

Sylvest strove to extricate himself from his wife's grasp, and, deaf to her prayer, was about to pursue his mad project, when, after a moment of deathly silence, he heard the shrill voice of Faustina exclaim:

"Dead! Dead already! Thou thyself predicted, beautiful magician, that my rival Siomara would fall into my power and expire under my hand in diabolical tortures Thy prediction is accomplished; here thou art, dead—dead already! Yes, dead, like Mount Libanus. By Hercules!" added the monster, with a fiendish burst of laughter, "Mount Libanus is dead—long live Bibrix! Evohe! evohe! hither, all of you! Evohe! come! Wine, songs, and flowers! My ri-

val is dead! Wine, songs, and intoxication!"

The instruments of music sounded, and frenzied songs and cries kept time with that infernal dance, the sight of which had well-nigh driven Sylvest mad with horror.

Siomara was dead. Nothing remained for the slave but to flee with Loyse. Breathless and bewildered as he was, it was with difficulty that he found his way through the darkness to the park-wall, over which he helped his wife by means of the bough, and both took their way in haste toward the desert valley.

I, Fergan, who write this, am the son of Pearon, who was the son of Sylvest, whose father was Guilhern, the son of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, the last free Gaul of our family. Sylvest, my grandfather, died at the age of ninety-six. I was then in my fifteenth year; my birth had cost my mother her life. Shortly after her death, Pearon, my father, was crushed by the wheel of a mill that he was turning.

Of several stories of his life that my grandfather, Sylvest, intended for me, two were lost. The only one that he bequeathed to me, with the other parchments of our family, was the preceding narrative of the events that occurred to him when he was a slave of Lord Diabolus in the town of Orange; having miraculously escaped the death that awaited him in the amphitheatre, he repaired to the garden of the patrician Faustina, where he found my grandmother Loyse, and fled with her, after the last agonizing cries of Siomara, who was tortured to death by the great Roman lady.

I remember (and these memories are already indistinct) having been told in my childhood by my grandfather that, after his flight, he remained long in concealment with his wife Loyse, at first in the cavern of the Children of the Mistletoe, and afterward in a still more profound solitude, living on the fruits and roots which my grandfather gathered at night, and often a long way off in the cultivated fields.

The season was fine and delicious; and the two poor slaves, in the depths of their retreat, enjoyed with rapture the only days of freedom that they had ever known. Summer passed, however, and autumn likewise; the cold winter was approaching, when no more fruits and vegetables could be found, and lastly, my mother, whose clothes were in rags and whose health failed more and more, was on the point of bringing me into the world. My grandfather resigned himself anew to slavery, rather than see his wife die of want and hunger, a death which would have been shared by her unborn child.

The fugitive slaves who were arrested far from their master's dwelling, or who refused to tell to whom they belonged, when, like my grandfather and his wife, they had succeeded in ridding themselves of the collar on which the name of their owner was inscribed, belonged to the Roman public treasury, and were either sold for its benefit or employed as slaves on the public works.

My grandfather and his wife, after several days' journey among the mountains, reached the suburbs of Marseilles, almost dead with fatigue and hunger, and, inquiring for the treasury agent, confessed that they had fled from their master, and surrendered at discretion. By the blessing of the gods, the agent was a humane man; he took pity on them, and promised that instead of being sold, they should remain slaves of the state and be employed, my grandfather on the public works that were being constructed at Marseilles, and my grandmother in his own house, to look after his children; the Roman, however, could not save my grandfather and his wife from the shame and pain of being branded in the forehead as fugitives.

During long years, the fate of my grandfather was endurable, though he was subjected to arduous toil. He was at first employed in the construction of an aqueduct, for which he was obliged to carry the stones, either on his back or harnessed to a cart. He returned at night half dead with fatigue; but, at least, instead of sleeping in the ergastulum, with his companions in slavery, he was allowed to be with his wife and child, a favor which he obtained by his gentleness and zeal from the wife of the treasury agent.

Years passed in this manner. My grandfather having become old and worn out by labor, was no longer able to carry heavy burdens, and was intrusted by the Roman with the care of his garden. My grandmother died shortly before my father was of an age to marry—as slaves marry—and my mother died in bringing me into the world. I was eight years old when my father, who had remained a government slave and was employed in agriculture, was crushed by the wheel of an oil-mill that he was turning. The agent's son had succeeded to the post of his father; by the recommendation of the latter, he retained my grandfather with him as gardener, he being able, though very old, to perform the duties.

After my mother's death, a Gallic slave belonging to the same family had nursed me, together with her daughter Genevieve, my foster-sister and companion in slavery. At the age of ten, we were both employed in the lighter duties of the household; a few years after, however, our master, who, like his father, had the charge of the government slaves, made me learn the weav-

er's trade, in order to make me profitable by hiring me out. My sister, Genevieve, learned to be a laundress.

I was fifteen when my grandfather, feeling himself weaker every day, had a presentiment that his end was approaching. He lived in a cabin in my master's garden, where I was permitted to go and see him now and then, when my day's work was done. One evening I found him in bed in his cabin. He bid me close the door securely; then, rising with a great effort, he mounted a stool and took from a hiding-place contrived between two rafters of the roof a broad belt of thick linen; from this sort of sheath, he drew several long strips of tanned skin, such as are used to write upon in our country. These strips, about twice as wide as the palm of the hand, were sewed together at the ends, and were covered with our fine, close Gallic characters. To these rolls were attached a small golden sickle, a brass bell, of about the size of the thumb, and a piece of the iron collar which my grandfather had worn at the time of his escape from the amphitheatre of Orange, and which he had succeeded in filing off, with the aid of his wife, Loyse, by means of wet sand and a dagger that he had carried away in his flight. On this fragment of the collar were still engraved the words in the Latin language, *Servus Sum.*

"My child," said my grandfather, "I feel my life ebbing away, but before dying I wish to accomplish a sacred duty. Although still very young, you are old enough to understand the value of a promise. Promise me, therefore, when you have read these narratives relating to our family, to accomplish the last wish of our ancestor, Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, which wish you will find written in these parchments. Promise me, also, my child, carefully to preserve the relics of our family—this little golden sickle, this brass bell, and this fragment of the collar which I wore during the most cruel days of my slavery. Hitherto, my poor child, you at least have known nothing of slavery but the painful toil and the shame, and even of the shame I am not sure. Your character is resigned, timid and shrinking; I find in you none of that Gallic fury of which the Romans talk, when speaking about our race. This comes, perhaps, from the fact that you are frail and puny. Ah! my child, races degenerate in slavery, both in strength of mind and in that of body. My grandfather Joel and my father Guilhern were more than six Roman feet in height; few men could have overcome them in wrestling; my stature did not equal theirs, but before I was bowed down by toil and years, I was tall and robust. Your poor father, my child, a victim as it were in his mother's womb to the sufferings of our wandering and fugitive life, had already degenerated from the ancient vigor of our race, and you are even smaller and weaker than your father. The sedentary habits of a weaver's life and the insufficient nourishment given slaves are increasing your bodily debility. May your character not grow feeble, and may you regain the energy of your race should the hour of justice and deliverance come—if it ever comes, alas!—during your life! You will learn, at least, from these writings the sufferings that your ancestors have endured; this consciousness and knowledge, perchance, may kindle in you the ardor of the old Gallic blood, and give you courage and strength to break the odious yoke worn by you, of a race once free, and to avenge yourself and your fathers on the Romans, our eternal oppressors. I had joined to this story, which you will read, that of my escape with my wife Loyse, of which I have sometimes spoken to you, and had depictsd the sweet joys of the only days of freedom that I have endured during my long life of slavery; I had also given an account of my meeting with one of our courageous and venerated Druids, a slave like me and my companions, at the time when we were employed on the aqueduct at Marseilles; but these two narratives have been lost. The most important of the three remains—the one that I give you. Swear to me, my child, religiously to preserve this trust; if you think yourself unable to conceal it anywhere in safety, wear it about you under your clothing, by means of this belt, as I have often done. Farewell, my child; be faithful to your gods; have but one hope and aim, the deliverance of our beloved Gaul; and but one remembrance, the ills that your race has suffered!"

I made my grandfather the promise that he asked; then, according to his advice, I fastened the belt around my waist, under my clothing, and quitted him after a last embrace. I was never more to behold him: the next day he expired.

Genevieve, my foster-sister, who became my wife a few years after, had been hired as a laundress by the wife of a Roman of Marseilles, called Lord Gremion, a relative of the first master of my grandfather, and also a treasury agent.

The dominion of the Romans extended at that time from one end of the world to the other. Judea was subject to them, as a dependency of the province of Syria, governed by a Roman prefect. Several vessels belonging to Marseilles sailed from this port to the country of the Israelites. Gremion, who was a kinsman of the Roman procurator in Judea, by the name of Pontius Pilate, was appointed to replace the tribune of the treasury who collected the taxes in that country; for wherever the Roman dominion

was established, the exaction of taxes was established at the same time.

Aurelia, Gremion's wife, who had hired my wife Genevieve as a laundress, was so much pleased with her zeal and gentleness that she wished to have her company during this long journey to the country of the Israelites, and begged her husband to purchase her, which he did.

The gods were propitious to us. Aurelia was one of the few Roman ladies that showed themselves compassionate toward their slaves. Young, beautiful, and of a sprightly and cheerful character, she was not likely to render slavery over-painful to my wife, and this thought rendered our separation less bitter to me. I had become skilled as a weaver, and brought in a large profit to my master, who hired me out.

My life was like that of all slaves who were mechanics—neither better nor worse; and, moreover, I confess that my grandfather had judged me rightly. I had not inherited—far from it—the fury and ultra valor of our old Gallic race, and its savage impatience of slavery. Servitude weighed heavily upon me, as it does on all; but (may my ancestors and, should I have a son, my posterity forgive me!) I should never have dared to think of breaking my chains by violence or of escaping bondage by flight. My character has remained as feeble as my body; and when I sometimes read the terrible battles of my race and the frightful perils which my grandfather Sylvest escaped, the perspiration trickles from my brow, and I vow never to expose myself—voluntarily at least—to such danger, but to do my best to ply my shuttle so as to satisfy my masters. By this resignation I have gained the advantage of being a little less ill-treated than my companions, though, like them, I have made acquaintance with the scourge and the rods, in spite of my docility and my wish to do well; but masters have their caprices and their fits of anger, and to be restive under them is to run the risk of a worse fate. I, therefore, endure mine, contenting myself with rubbing my shoulders when they smart. In spite of the example of my grandfather and the solicitations of some of my companions, who give me credit for great energy, as being of the race of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, I have never consented to attend the secret meetings of the Children of the Mistletoe, which are still kept up in Gaul. The torture of crucifixion, which is inflicted on rebellious slaves, inspires me with too much dread, and I shudder, frail as I am, at the mere thought of an armed revolt.

Besides, these enterprises have always appeared to me insane. As an instance: About the beginning of the reign of Tiberius, Augustus's successor, the secret societies of the Children of the Mistletoe and other Gallic conspirators, after long waiting for an opportune moment to revolt, determined, according to the advice of the Druids, to attempt a general uprising.

Sacrovir,* a Nivernese Gaul, was the soul of this insurrection, appearing at the secret councils, sending emissaries in concert with the Druids, and showing Italy itself impatiently enduring the yoke of Tiberius; he believed that then or never was the moment to regain the liberty of Gaul. A great conspiracy was set on foot, of which Sacrovir was the chief, and which he directed with extreme circumspection. He desired that matters should not be hurried, but that the conspirators should wait till all the conspiring cities were ready to act. Unfortunately, the Gauls of Anjou and Touraine rose too soon, and their rebellion, not being supported, was immediately suppressed. The wealthy Gauls, siding with the Romans, joined them in chastising, as they said, the ingratitude of the rebels who had had the audacity to revolt against the august emperor Tiberius, the protector of the Gauls. Sacrovir had always fought in the foremost rank, without a helmet, and with his breast uncovered. His followers, overpowered by numbers, disbanded. Drawn into the flight of those whom he had roused to revolt, he took refuge in Autun and endeavored to stir up that city against the Romans. The magistrates and people, fearing the vengeance of Tiberius, threatened to deliver up Sacrovir to the enemy. Upon this, he repaired with several of his friends to his country-house in the neighborhood of the city. They set fire to the lower part, then, ascending to the terrace that surmounted it, seated themselves at the table and emptied a last cup to the deliverance of Gaul, of which they did not despair. When the flames reached the terrace where Sacrovir and his friends were drinking, they all stabbed themselves and were swallowed up in the flames, offering their blood, like our ancestors, as a holocaust to Hesus.

A Gaul, I deplore the death of these valiant men; but I say to myself, despondently, (may my ancestors again pardon me for it!) there is no more hope for the liberty of our country, seeing that so many heroes have sacrificed their generous blood in vain, since the days of the Chief of the Hundred Valleys, the guest of Joel.

My wife Genevieve is a warrior in comparison with me, and is worthy, by her ourage and virtue, to belong to our family, which numbers among its ancestresses Hena, the virgin of the Isle of Sena; Meroë, the wife of Albinik the sailor; and Margarid, the Gallic matron. I have read the parch-

* See Tacitus' *Annals*; Thierry's *History of the Gauls*, vol. iii.; Martin's *History of France*, vol. i.

ments left me by my grandfather, to Genevieve, whom they filled with enthusiasm. How often she has tenderly reproached me for my lukewarmness and despondency, exclaiming, "Ah! if I were a man—if I were descended from the brenn of the tribe of Karnak, that race fruitful in valiant men and women—at the first uprising of the Gauls, I should offer up my blood."

"I would rather live tranquilly by your side, Genevieve," I replied, "patiently submitting to the evils which I cannot help, and plying my shuttle as well as I can for my master's benefit."

It was, therefore, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, that my wife set out from Marseilles, with her mistress Aurelia, on her way to Judea.

The story to which a small silver cross is attached, was written by Genevieve a year after her return from her journey. My life has hitherto been so monotonous and insignificant, that it would make a sorry figure among our family narratives. That of Genevieve, although it relates some adventures, of no great importance, which occurred in the country of the Hebrews at the time that she dwelt in Jerusalem, will at least have the charm of curiosity inspired by all events that take place in a remote country of which very little is known. I shall therefore bequeath it to my posterity, should I leave any, together with the manuscripts that tell the story of the GOLDEN SICKLE, the BRASS BELL, and the IRON COLLAR.

FINIS.

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